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On the Way to Whiteness

Kari Miettinen

On the Way to Whiteness

Christianization, Conflict and Change in Colonial Ovamboland, 1910–1965

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Cover illustration: Paula, one of the first Christians of the village of Eunda in the Uukolonkadhi community, sitting by the Kunene River in the early 1960s. (Photo Raimo Holopainen. By courtesy of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission)

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Joensuu 11 January 2005

Kari Miettinen

Abbreviations

AELCIN	Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
AFMS	Archives of the Finnish Mission Society
AVEM	Archives of the United Evangelical Mission
A450	C.H.L. Hahn Collection – Private Accession A450 National Archives of Namibia
BAC	Archives of the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Windhoek
CDM	Consolidated Diamond Mines
ELC	Emil Liljeblad collection
FELM	Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
FMS	Finnish Mission Society
mmm	Minutes of missionaries' meeting
NAF	National Archives of Finland
NAN	National Archives of Namibia
NAO	Archives of the native administration, Ovamboland
NCO	Native Commissioner Ovamboland
NMC	Native Military Corps
RCO	Archives of the Resident Commissioner, Ovamboland
RMS	Rhenish Mission Society
SWAA	Records of the South West Africa Administration

Glossary

aathithi (sg. omuthithi)	ancestral spirits (usually used in plural)
efundja	flood
efundula	girls' initiation ceremony (oshikwanyama)
egumbo	homestead, house
elenga (pl. omalenga)	councellor, adviser, officer
eteta (or okateta)	front apron
iiluli (sg. oshiluli)	evil spirits (usually used in plural)
iilyalyaka	red sorghum
kalunga	god
mwene goshikandjo	regional headman
ohango	girls' initiation ceremony (oshindonga)
okashava	raid for obtaining cattle
omahangu	millet
omulodhi (pl. aalodgi)	witch
omutikili (pl. aatikili)	sorcerer
omutokoli (pl. aatokoli)	judge
onganga (pl. oonganga)	healer / diviner
ongombe yohango	wedding ox
oshana	floodwater course
oshidhila (pl. iidhila)	taboo
oyonda	wedding ox

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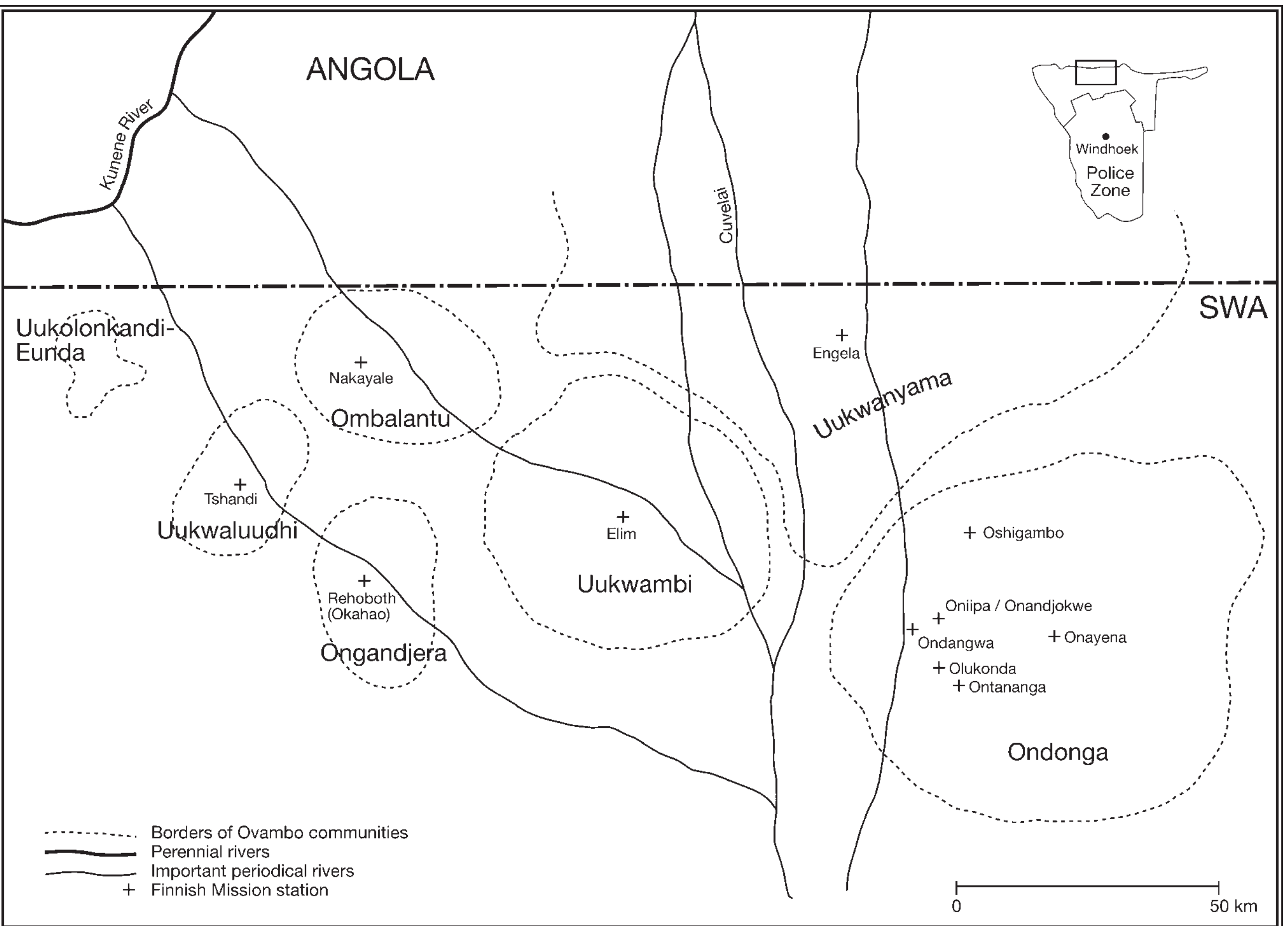
ANGOLA
Kunene River
Cuvelai
Windhoek
Police Zone
SWA
Uukolonkandi-Eunda
Nakayale
Ombalantu
Engela
Uukwanyama
Tshandi
Uukwaluudhi
Elim
Oshigambo
Rehoboth (Okahao)
Uukwambi
Oniipa / Onandjokwe
Ondangwa
Onayena
Ongandjera
Olukonda
Ontananga
Ondonga
Borders of Ovambo communities
Perennial rivers
Important periodical rivers
Finnish Mission station
0
50 km

Introduction

The tradition of research into the Ovambo and their history

Since Namibia gained her independence in 1990, after having been under apartheid rule for decades, it is quite understandable that the bulk of what has been written about the country and its history has by so far been produced by outsiders. The Finns have made a considerable contribution to this writing because of their historical links with the country, established by Finnish missionary work among the Ovambo – its largest population group. It was Finnish missionaries, alongside their German brethren, who published ethnographic descriptions of the Ovambo culture and society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The problem with many of these descriptions, however, is that they give a rather biased view of the Ovambo society, emphasizing its "negative" aspects. Some of the missionaries' descriptions, such as Herman Tönjes' "*Ovamboland*" or Kalle Koivu's "*Amboneekerin jokapäiväinen leipä*" (Ovambo Negro's Daily Bread)[1], nevertheless also give valuable information in some respects about precolonial society, its customs and its economy.

In the 20th century general ethnographical descriptions were also being produced by non-missionaries, or missionaries who had adopted a primary role as ethnographers. In this category we find Native Commissioner Hahn's "*Ovambo*", Estermann's "*The Ethnography of Southwestern Angola*", Lebzelter's "*Eingeborenenkulturen in Südwest- und Südafrika*", Bruwer's "*The Kwanyama of SWA*" and Loeb's "*In Feudal Africa*", for example.[2] Loeb and Bruwer not only provide descriptions but also analyse Ovambo society. Estermann's work is probably the most credible as an ethnographic description, however, because it is based on decades of work among the people as a Roman Catholic missionary-ethnographer. Loeb is also rich in information based on interviews and secondary sources, but the underlying idea of his study is somewhat dubious, for he believes that many aspects of Ovambo culture have diffused from ancient Mediterranean cultures.[3] Thus, he tends to belittle the Africans' social inventiveness in a way.

Scholarly and more focused studies of Ovambo culture and society began to increase in the 1970s and 1980s, and the Finns have been dominant to a great extent in this particular field of research by producing many studies on individual socio-cultural aspects. These include the pre-Christian concept of god (Aarni), witchcraft and magic (Hiltunen), the status and power of kings (Lehmann,

1 Tönjes, 1911; Koivu, 1925.
2 Hahn, 1928; Lebzelter, 1934; Bruwer, 1961; Loeb, 1962; Estermann, 1976 (orig. 1956).
3 Loeb, 1962, p. 10–19.

Salokoski) and marriage systems (Tuupainen).[4] The sources used in these studies tended to vary, but interviews and missionaries' writings played an important role in many of them. The collection of Ovambo narratives concerning old customs and folklore which the missionary Emil Liljeblad collected in the 1930s has also been widely used. Source materials of a new kind became available for researchers in the 1990s when the records of some Lutheran Ovambo parishes were microfilmed as part of the Ovamboland population history project, the outcome of which was the analysis by Veijo Notkola and Harri Siiskonen of demographic trends in Ovamboland in the 20th century.[5] The parish records also provided material for Minna Saarelma-Maunumaa's study of the European influence on the Ovambo anthroponymic system.[6]

Nobody has yet ventured to write a general history of the Ovambo, although there are several studies which cover longer periods of time. Heindrich Vedder wrote something about Ovambo history in the 19th century in his "*alte Südwestafrika*"in the 1930s, particularly about their early contacts with Europeans and the peoples of Central Namibia.[7] He must have based his writing on missionary documents as well as on information provided by Finnish missionaries, which is obviously one reason why his view of the Ovambo is eurocentrically stereotypical, with emphasis on violence and tyrannical rulers. Some less prejudiced and more balanced studies describing longer spans were made later, e.g. Frieda Williams' work on the early history of the Ovambo kingdoms from the 17th to the early 20th century.[8] Her interpretation is understandably mainly based on oral tradition, and she clearly admits the weaknesses inherent in such source material. Oral tradition has a tendency to change towards greater uniformity in due course and this may be the reason why Williams' study presents precolonial Ovambo communities as rather static and unchanging social units. The slightly more recent history of Ovamboland has been studied by Patricia Hayes, whose work deals with the period from the 1880s to the 1930s and is based on extensive reading of colonial and missionary material.[9] More recently a political history of 20th century Ovamboland has been published by Allan Cooper, who relies heavily on secondary sources but still achieves a good general description of political developments.[10] There has been a growing tendency since independence to study Namibian history from the African perspective, again using oral evidence as source material. One general, although not coherent, interpretation of this oral history is the history of Kwanyama, which is based on a narrative by the late Rev. Vilho Kaulinge.[11]

The migration of labour has been an important factor that has greatly affected Ovambo communities and has also been very important for the European-led

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4 Lehmann, 1954/55; Tuupainen, 1970; Aarni, 1982; Hiltunen, 1986; Salokoski, 1992; Hiltunen, 1993.
5 Notkola & Siiskonen, 2000.
6 Saarelma-Maunumaa, 1997; Saarelma-Maunumaa, 2003.
7 Vedder, 1985 (orig. 1934).
8 Wiliams, 1991.
9 Hayes, 1992.
10 Cooper, 2001.
11 "*Healing the Land*", 1997.

economy of Central and Southern Namibia. There are therefore quite a number of studies which have described or analysed aspects of labour migration – its origins, its organization, its social consequences etc.[12] Other subjects that historians have studied include precolonial long-distance trade (Siiskonen), the Ovambo reaction to German colonialism (Eirola), the emergence of South African colonial rule in Ovamboland (Kotze, Hayes), reactions to colonial rule (Hartmann, Silvester) and agro-ecological and economic changes (Kreike).[13]

The Finnish missionary work was an important part of the history of the Ovambo from the 1870s onwards. A general history of Finnish missions in Africa, including Ovamboland, was written in 1958 by the missionary Matti Peltola for the centennial of the Finnish Missionary Society.[14] This work is very much a child of its time. It is informative as an organizational history of the missionary work, but otherwise Peltola's interpretations are in many ways questionable. He is totally uncritical of the missionaries' aims, views and work, while he underestimates the Africans' role in the christianization process. His view of Africans is also deeply embedded in the patronizing approach which seems to have been typical of missionaries for an amazingly long time. More recently, Finnish missionary work as part of the mission history of Namibia has been discussed by Shekutaamba Nambala and Nils Oermann, for example.[15]

Various scholars have also studied limited sectors or aspects of the missionary work. Lahja Lehtonen, who worked as a secondary school teacher in northern Namibia for years, has written a history of the FMS school work in Ovamboland.[16] This provides a good overview of the subject but is lacking in analytical depth. Furthermore, she has, maybe unintentionally, tended to emphasize constantly how much good the mission schools have done for the Africans. Other aspects of missionary work that have recently been studied are the Finns' relations with the Anglican and Roman Catholic missionaries (Kati Kemppainen) and the role of women in the FMS work (Eila Helander and Kirsti Kena).[17] These works are analytical and critical, although Kemppainen's analysis suffers from a lack of primary sources on the Anglican and Catholic side.

One aspect of the history of Finnish missions to Ovamboland is the relationship between the missionaries and the local people, and another one is the effects of the missionary work on Ovambo society. Missionary–Ovambo relations on a general level have been studied by E.Stals, while Martti Eirola and the present writer have analysed the missionaries' relations with the Ovambo rulers.[18] In Peltola's history, the Africans are predominately in the role of passive recipients who gratefully accept the good things which the missionaries bring them. A some-

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12 E.g. Banghart, 1972; Moorsom, 1977; Gordon, 1978; Kouvalainen, 1980; Strassegger, 1988; Hayes, 1992; Hishongwa 1992; McKittrick 1995; Kreike, 1996; Cooper, 1999; McKittrick, 2002.

13 Kotze, 1984; Hartmann, 1989; Siiskonen, 1990; Eirola, 1992; Hayes, 1992; Silvester, 1995; Kreike, 1996; Hartmann, 1998

14 Peltola, 1958.

15 Nambala, 1990; Oermann , 1999.

16 Lehtonen, 1999.

17 Kemppainen, 1998; Kena, 2000; Helander, 2001.

18 Stals, 1969, Eirola, 1992; Miettinen, 2000.

what more objective view of the missionaries' activities was nevertheless provided by the theologian Seppo Teinonen in his study of the role of missionary work in the reformation of the Ovambo marriage system.[19] Although he sees Christian marriage as superior to other forms and accepts some of the missionaries' dubious views at face value, he questions some of the views which missionaries had held dear for decades – e.g their views on bridewealth.

One quite thorough analysis of the Finnish missionaries' activities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries is that of Tuula Varis, who studied the missionaries' use of power within the Christian community.[20] Apart from revealing something about the networks of power, she also brought to light much information about the missionaries' ways of justifying their work and about their early views on the Ovambo and their customs. Her study would be even more remarkable if she had not confined it to missionaries but had also told us something about Ovambo reactions to the missionaries' use of their pastoral power. This would have been possible to some extent even on the basis of the missionaries' documents which Varis used as her sources.

Another recent study of the missionaries' activities is Teuvo Raiskio's book on FMS work among the bushmen and the image of the bushmen which the missionaries conveyed to the general public.[21] Although not a methodological masterpiece, this is still a valuable work because it presents a critical view of the missionaries and led in its time to a highly unusual public debate in the national media about missionary work and missionaries' values.[22]

The best analysis so far concerning the outcome of the Finnish missionaries' work and their relationship with the Ovambo is that of Meredith McKittrick. Both her doctoral dissertation "*Conflict and Social Change in northern Namibia 1950–1954*" and her newer publication "*To Dwell Secure – Generation, Christianity, and Colonialism in Ovamboland*"[23] are social histories of Ovambo communities covering a long period of time and dealing with various issues. Earlier her emphasis was on describing and analysing generational conflicts, but later the interaction between the Ovambo and the missionaries became a more central theme. She has not only presented a well-founded view on some of the reasons which draw people to affiliate with missionaries, but she has also shown what the social consequences of

19 Teinonen, 1949.

20 Varis, 1988.

21 Raiskio, 1997.

22 *Helsingin Sanomat* 18 May 1997 (Jorma Korhonen: Ambomaa ei ollutkaan suomalaisille kunnian kenttä / Ovamboland was not a field of honour for the Finns), 28 May 1997 (Arvi Hurskainen's letter to the editor: Namibia-kuvaamme syytä pohtia/ We need to reconsider our image of Namibia) 29 May 1997 (Antti Erkkilä's letter to the editor: Suomalaistyöstä hyötyä pohjoiselle Namibialle/ The Finns' work has benefitted northern Namibia) , 8 June 1997 (Päiviö Latvus' letter to the editor: Kristittyjen lähetystyötä on moitittu aiemminkin / Christian missions have been criticized also before), 30 June 1997 (Taimi Sitari's letter to the editor: Namibiassa tehtiin hyvää työtä/ Good work was done in Namibia), 22 Sept 1997 (Simo Heininen's letter to the editor: Lähetysseura ei hymistele enää/ The Mission Society is no longer eulogizing), 22 Sept. 1997 (Risto Ahonen's letter to the editor: Namibiaan syntyi lämmin yhteys / A warm relation was created with Namibia).

23 McKittrick, 1995; McKittrick, 2002.

this affiliation were. McKittrick's analysis is based primarily on a large body of interviews, and therefore she is able in a way to tell the story from the Ovambo point of view.

Aims of this research

Once upon a time there was a very popular Sunday school song in Finland which told the story of "Black Saara – the little Negro girl". Saara learned from her white teacher about Jesus, the friend of all children, and about the golden town which is waiting in Heaven. Saara was interested and eventually became a Christian. But, alas, she then fell ill and died. But the story had a happy ending because she went to Heaven, where, according to the last stanza:

> "Now to thank her Jesus
> she sits there playing her little harp.
> The blood of the Lamb
> has washed black Saara all white again."[24]

Thus, black becomes white in heaven[25]. But as only Christians go to Heaven, so they say, another metamorphosis must take place on earth. Saara must first become Christian before she can eventually become white. It is this first metamorphosis which is the main theme of this present research. In other words, what made the Ovambo to convert to Lutheran Christianity during the period from 1910 to 1965?

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24 Transl. KM.

25 Also in another missionary text, "*Lumivalkoiseksi*" (As white as snow) published in 1930, a Zulu girl turns white after death (Löytty, 1997, p. 14). Missionaries also occasionally used a clear black-white dichotomy in their letters, so that black represented everything negative and white everything positive. Seeing white as good and black as bad, and the fact that European Christian imagery has made Heaven a "whites-only" place, could be taken as proof of racism on the part of the missionaries. That may be the case to some extent, but the question is obviously a more complex one. If racism is defined as a belief that some groups of people ("races") are biologically inferior to others and therefore destined to remain inferior, then Black Saara is not a racist song. After all, Saara is promoted to that superior group of whites after death. From a European Christian perspective she has become one of "us". This is the key point. To my mind, many missionary texts use concepts of "whiteness" and "blackness" to construct a sense of cultural otherness. White as a symbol of good and positive, and black of evil and negative, had long roots in European culture, and that symbolism had also been adopted by future missionaries, probably already in the nursery. When Europeans, including missionaries, then came into first-hand contact with Africans, they needed popular concepts to describe the difference between what they regarded to be inferior African cultures and the superior European culture. Here they adopted the old black-white dichotomy, which now became part of what has been called "Eurocentric grammar". In an African context, however, such a dichotomy is bound to lead one's thoughts to the alleged biological basis of racism, and therefore Black Saara and Lumivalkoiseksi appear to be racist songs. (See Mudimbe, 1988, p. 4–5; Hall, 1997, p. 244–245; Löytty, 1997, p. 13–15, 56–58.) But just because Saara and the Zulu girl advanced to the allegedly superior state of "whiteness", we cannot regard these songs as expressions of pure-bred biological racism. Instead, they are examples of the European Christian sense of cultural and religious superiority – expressed in this case, according to present standards, in very bad taste.

The second main theme concerns social consequences of christianization, not all of them, obviously, but some. We will take a look at some social relations and practices with the intention of analysing the extent to which Finnish missionaries actually did, or did not, alter Ovambo society. Another aspect of the consequences of christianization involves the social conflicts which it caused. Missionaries' published writings tend to simplify this aspect by seeing conflicts as having taken place only between Christians and non-Christians, because the latter opposed christianization. It was not that simple, however. Some aspects of the christianization process also caused conflicts inside the Christian community and between the missionaries and the Ovambo Christians. These conflicts will be described and analysed in due course. Thus, the main themes of this work will be christianization (conversion) in Ovamboland and the social conflicts and social changes caused by it.

General African histories, and general African church histories, have constantly emphasised how important the phenomena of Christianity, christianization and the missionaries' activities have been in Africa during the last century and a half. Not only has the rapid spread of the new faith during the colonial period been noted with some amazement, but also its multiple social, cultural, economic and political consequences have been pointed out. Furthermore, it has also been pointed out that these consequences have not been solely positive or negative from the Africans' point of view, but have had elements which either improved or detracted from the lot of the indigenous people. Christianity is said to have contributed to African development in many ways; it became an ideology which united many Africans across cultural and social boundaries, missionaries provided Africans with new knowledge by means of formal education, they established healthcare services, they educated leaders for the independent African countries, and many African church leaders played a prominent role in the liberation of the continent. But then there was the dark side; many missionaries were agents of colonialism and thereby connected with the suppression of the African people, Christianity created new divisions between people (between adherents to different denominations, for example), and Christian bigotry destroyed many valuable aspects of the indigenous cultures.[26] Thus Christianity in Africa has been an ambiguous phenomenon, but it has undeniably been an important phenomenon, in good and evil. Its importance has been recognized not only by scholars but also by ordinary people. Some of McKittrick's elderly Ovambo informants, for example, asserted that Christianity marked the greatest and the most meaningful change in twentieth-century Ovamboland.[27]

Christianization was an important change for Africa, but for a long time it was studied in a highly unbalanced manner; the history of Christianity in Africa was the history of European missionary work there.[28] It was therefore still possible in

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26 See e.g. Opoku, 1985, p. 525–526, 537; Mudimbe, 1988, p. 54–55; Uka, 1989, p. 20–21;Tshibangu & Ajayi & Sanneh, 1993, p. 501–503, 507–508; Isichei, 1995, p. 1; Sundkler & Steed, 2000, p. 1038–1039; Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century African History, 2003, p. 83–89 (entry "Christianity").

27 McKittrick, 2002, p. 17.

28 E.g. Luig, 1997, p. 16; Sundkler & Steed, p. 1–2.

1967 for the British sociologist John Peel to argue that ”the process by which African people come to forsake their traditional religion for Islam or Christianity is among the most significant and the least-studied features of social change in Africa”.[29] Much has been done since then. Not only have critical assessments of the missionaries' role in Africa been produced[30], but several theories have also been built up concerning the conversion of Africans to world religions[31]. More important still, a large body of research into the conversion of Africans to Christianity has been produced, adopting different approaches, some being case-studies of the conversion of one ethnic group, some studies of the causes of conversion for specified subgroups (such as women), while others have taken one potential cause of conversion and examined its role in several ethnic groups.[32] It was still possible some years ago, however, for Professor Norman Etherington to state that more work needs to be done to study the German and Scandinavian missions, especially to Namibia.[33]

The aim of this work is to contribute to the body of knowledge on the conversion of Africans by producing a case-study of the phenomenon as it affected the Ovambo and of some of the social aspects connected with it. But this is not only a study of Ovambo conversion, or Ovambo reactions to the missionaries' offer of a new religion and world view. Neither is this primarily a study of Finnish missionary work in Ovamboland, and definitely not of colonial rule in Ovamboland. Instead, it is a study of Ovambo-missionary interaction in a colonial context – its ups and downs and its outcomes. Basically we will be interested in how African people adopted some aspects of non-indigenous culture from the Europeans. But although the flow of influences to be studied was from the missionaries to the Ovambo, it must not be assumed that the latter were passive recipients of cultural influences. On the contrary, they actively selected what to adopt, at least partly guided by what they regarded to be in their interests in the colonial situation. The South African colonial rule in Ovamboland was an important background factor which seem to have affected missionary-Ovambo interaction, and therefore various aspects of colonial rule, even though they are not as such themes of this research, will pop up frequently in the following pages.

The period of time covered by this research extends from 1910 to 1965. The story begins a decade before the commencement of mass conversions, and continues until a decade after the second conversion peak. By the end of the period, approximately half of the Ovambo population had become Christians. The reasons for beginning the description in 1910 are rather obvious. The mass conversions of the early 1920s did not come out of the blue but were caused by something that had happened in the 1910s. Furthermore, one interesting phenomenon, the first conversion of an Ovambo ruler, took place in the early 1910s. It is less obvious why the story should end in 1965. Thinking of the sources, it would have been natural to analyse only the period up to the Second World War, for by the mid-1940s the

29 Peel, 1967, p. 292.
30 One, say, classical study in this respect is Beidelman's “*Colonial Evangelism*” (1982).
31 See chapter “Theories of conversion”.
32 See secondary sources of this study for some examples.
33 Etherington, 1996, p. 218.

missionaries had handed the day-to-day running of the parishes to Ovambo clergy and from then on they had less to do with rank-and-file Christians, which meant that they were less well informed about what was happening in the parishes and their documents are less informative about occurrences at the grass-root level.

By not ending the story at the Second World War we have created a temporal imbalance in the analysis, as the pre-war period is analysed more thoroughly than the post-war period. Although every effort is made to continue the analysis throughout the period whenever possible, the reader may still occasionally wonder whether phenomena which were prevalent before the war still existed after it. A couple of clarifications can be made in this respect. Firstly, the missionaries' direct role as agents for social, cultural and religious change in Ovamboland diminished after the war because they withdrew from parish work to supervisory positions. On the other hand, their goals, and their attitudes towards Africans, remained basically the same until around 1960. At that point new ideas from outside the religious sphere seem to have begun to have more influence on their world view.

Notwithstanding the temporal imbalance, it would not have been correct to analyse only the period up to World War II, because it would have omitted the second wave of conversions around 1950, and the period when the strengthening of nationalism made many Ovambo adopt a new, highly critical attitude towards the missionaries. The story is therefore continued up to the mid-1960s, after which the missionaries seldom wrote anything that would be relevant from the present point of view. Also, the situation in Ovamboland, and therefore the context in which religious changes took place, altered markedly after the beginning of the armed liberation struggle in the late 1960s.

Chapter Two outlines the social, political, economic and cultural situation in Ovamboland around the beginning of the twentieth century, describing the environment which gave birth to mass conversions to Christianity. This description perhaps makes precolonial society appear somewhat too stable, although it was not stagnated and changes did take place. Some changes are referred to, but they are not emphasised because the aim here is not to study the changing precolonial Ovambo society. Social change is therefore described only to an extent which is relevant for the comprehensibility of the actual theme. On the other hand, Chapter Two obviously contains plenty of information which in fact is not necessary for understanding the christianization process. It is obvious, however, that this research will have uncovered innumerable small pieces of information which throw light on questions in Ovambo history which have remained unanswered in earlier research, or have given conflicting answers. It is therefore appropriate to share this information with others. Much of this extra information is in the form of footnote.

The third chapter is basically about the missionaries' aims: what was their view of the Ovambo, what kind of "new" African did they want to create, and what means did they use when trying to change people? This chapter also gives an overview on how the Ovambo, and particularly the Christians among them, reacted to the missionaries' aims and actions. It describes on a general level the history of Ovambo-missionary relations in the early twentieth century.

Chapter Four forms the hard core of this research and deals with conversion to Christianity. It begins with an overview of theories of conversion, as it is occasionally necessary later in the chapter to analyse the validity of various theories in the light of the Ovamboland reality. The second sub-chapter describes what kinds of people converted to Christianity (sex ratio, age structure, social background etc.). This analysis is based on parish records is to some degree statistical. We then proceed to take a look at the outcome of the conversions, i.e. the Ovambo Christians. An assessment is attempted of whether or not the conversions were in general based on religious conviction. This information about how the Ovambo understood conversion is needed because it gives some ideas about the reasons why they sought baptism.

The latter part of Chapter Four is dedicated to analysing the causes of conversion, a question that is approached in two ways. Firstly, an attempt is made to find out why there were two periods when conversions were more numerous than at other times, at the beginning of the 1920s and around 1950s. Secondly, certain phenomena are analysed which were assumed, either by the missionaries or in earlier research, to have played a role as causes of conversion, or which otherwise appear to have been relevant background factors. The fact that many men converted while they were on labour contracts falls into the last category. The first category includes, for example, the role of material aims, which have been emphasised in earlier research, and the guiding role of traditional Ovambo leaders, which the missionaries' writings have emphasised. Whether these really were relevant factors in Ovambo conversions will be answered later.

Chapter Five returns to the issue of change and relations discussed in Chapter Three, now in the form of an analysis of the social outcome of christianization. The role of the missionaries as agents for social change will be assessed by taking a look at two aspects of Ovambo society, i.e. the role of the traditional elite and gender relations. Since the analysis of all the social changes which the missionary work caused, or may have caused, would have been an utterly impossible task, these two aspects were chosen as examples, the social role of the traditional leaders because the colonial administration often accused the missionaries of eroding their power, and gender relations because the missionaries' activities have often been said to have had an ambiguous effect on the status of African women. Another question discussed in Chapter Five is the effect of christianization and the missionaries' activities on social relations. Relations between Christians and non-Christians will be analysed at both the family and the community level. Furthermore, the general description of missionary–Christian relations given in Chapter Three will be pursued in greater depth by analysing certain issues that became points of conflict in this relationship. These conflicts tell us not only about the relationship between the missionaries and their adherents, but also about how each side understood the meaning of "being Christian".

This study lacks a comparative aspect. No comparison is made, for example, between conversions in Ovamboland and those in other mission fields in Africa, although familiarization with earlier research on African conversion has naturally been necessary in order to find potential explanations for Ovambo conversion. But no attempt has been made to return to the African stage after analysing the

Ovambo case, simply because it is neither the duty nor the calling of the present author to do so. It is sufficient to make this case-study and leave comparisons to scholars who have vast bodies of such case-studies at their disposal.

Another consideration is that the interpretations lack theoretical rigidity. A brief introduction to current theories of conversion is presented, and in some cases their validity is tested in the light of the Ovambo material, but no single theory is adopted as an a priori model for explaining Ovambo conversions, because none of them as such fits the case. That is also why the bold step is taken here of proposing a new theory regarding the process of conversion. Although the analysis has not been guided by any of the present theories, the information provided by the sources means that the interpretation of one of them, the Socio-Structural Explanation, may be regarded as more valid than those for the others.

It is possible to claim that the conflicts in missionary-Ovambo relations are overemphasized here. Such a claim would not necessarily be totally unjustified. It is probable that conflicts were less markedly in the foreground in everyday relations than they were in the missionaries' reports to their superiors back in Finland, as it was the resolving of conflict situations that required advice from headquarters, and therefore these had to be reported. But the fact remains that conflicts did occur and that they were not infrequent. Therefore, omitting the conflict issue would give a very untruthful picture of the relationship between the Ovambo/Ovambo Christians and the missionaries. It would also give a distorted picture of the conversion process. Any avoidance of conflict issues would in a way constitute a claim that the Ovambo were passive recipients who happily adopted Christianity in the exact form in which the missionaries were offering it. That was not the case. Furthermore, the views and actions of conflicting parties are most plainly manifested in actual conflicts between them, and therefore describing conflicts can give information about views and opinions which otherwise, i.e. without conflicts, would have remained undisclosed.

In 1936, Walde Kivinen, the presiding Finnish missionary in Ovamboland at that time, took a look back to the 1920s, when mass conversions to Christianity began. Kivinen felt that it had marked a great and important change for the Ovambo. But at the same time he hesitated to make any conclusive assessment of the role of Christianity in Ovamboland, because he "felt too small to do that" and the events were still too recent. Kivinen ended his thoughts by stating, "History may one day tell [whether it was a great change], although I am not sure whether it will be possible to have 'an impartial judgement of history'".[34]

Much time has passed since those events and this research is indeed such a "judgement of history", but it is by no means the only judgement. It must be stressed that this is only one interpretation of what happened, an interpretation that is based on a certain body of source material and has been made by a representative of one academic discipline who comes from a certain cultural background. The interpretation thus suffers from the problem which Richard Gray

34 W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 12 June 1936, Eac37, AFMS, NAF.

once pointed out, that "It is notoriously difficult for a historian to identify religious motivations, especially when he is dependent largely on the reports of alien observers."[35] It is difficult, but still possible, to produce some valid information about the matter, but this does not mean that there is no room for other interpretations. Meredith McKittrick has already produced one interpretation of the Ovambo conversions, but there is still, to my mind, room for at least one more. I look forward to it being made by a qualified Namibian historian.

A few words about orthography and language to end this chapter. When referring to Ovambo communities I have used their Oshindonga names rather than the Oshikwanyama versions. Thus, I prefer Uukwanyama to Oukwanyama, for example. People of various communities are referred to without the proper Oshindonga prefixes, as that seems to be the current practice in English language publications. Thus the people of Ondonga are Ndonga rather than Aandonga, and the inhabitants of Ombalantu are Mbalantu. In the case of languages, prefixes are used to make them clearly distinguishable from the names of peoples. Hence the language of the Ndonga is Oshindonga rather than simply Ndonga. The words "heathen" and "pagan" are occasionally used here for non-Christians. They are not to be understood pejoratively but simply as an attempt to reduce tautology.

One often sees publications which use the word "convert" synonymously with "Christian". As we are dealing here specifically with conversion, such a usage would be potentially misleading. I therefore prefer to use "convert" in its original meaning to refer to a person who has converted to a religion. "Christians" can thus either be persons who were baptised as children or converts who have later become established members of the Christian community. The same word also refers to the Christian Ovambo community as a whole.

Sources and methodology

This study is predominately based on the qualitative use of Finnish missionaries' documents – letters, minutes of various bodies, annual reports and other reports. These documents came into being because the missionaries were obliged to keep the central administration of the Missionary Society well informed about what was going on in the field. Therefore, in order to understand the nature of this flow of information and the role of the various organizations and officials which are occasionally mentioned in later chapters, it is necessary to describe briefly the main features of the Finnish Missionary Society organization.

The de facto highest decision-making body of the FMS was the Board of Directors in Helsinki. This had the power to decide on financial matters, annual budgets, salaries and allowances, for example. For preparatory purposes there were various committees such as the Missions Committee, the Committee for Financial Affairs and the Literature Committee. The highest functionary of the society was

35 Gray, 1990, p. 68.

the Mission Director, who was an *ex officio* member of the Board. He was responsible for supervising the work at the mission fields, but otherwise his duties were rather generally defined. For this reason, and because he controlled practically all the information received from the field, he could, if he so wished, act quite independently of the Board. The Mission Director was assisted, among others, by the Assistant Director and the Treasurer.[36]

Initially the work in the mission field was rigidly controlled by the Board of Directors which reserved the right to sanction every decision.[37] Because of slow communications and increased work-loads in the field, such a system of decision-making at the top of the organization soon became impractical, however, and extended powers of decision had to be vested in missionaries in the field, although the central administration was still responsible for decisions on important matters and still closely supervised the work in the field. The active missionaries in a field were headed by the presiding missionary, who was responsible for carrying out the board's orders, for keeping the home administration informed about current events in the field, and for contacts with the local colonial administration. With the increasing work-load in Ovamboland, the presiding missionary soon became incapable of handling all the above tasks alone, and a new body, the Field Administration Board, was founded in 1918. It consisted of the presiding missionary, the field treasurer and a couple of other members elected by the meeting of the missionaries. This board was responsible, among other things, for handling matters concerning mutual relations between missionaries and for the proper maintenance of the society's property in Ovamboland.[38] There were also special committees, such as the School Committee, which concentrated on planning. The third organ that was active in the field was the meeting of the missionaries. In some respects it ranked above the presiding missionary and the Field Administration Board, because it made decisions in matters which were beyond the authority of these instances but were not decided on by the Board of Directors. The meetings of missionaries also discussed plans concerning the development of the work, and made recommendations to the Board of Directors about steps that should be taken in this respect. Missionaries held usually two meetings every year, one in January, at which each of them presented his or her annual report, which was discussed before all the reports were sent to Helsinki, and the other in autumn, when the main task was to prepare the next year's budget proposal for the Board of Directors.

The flow of information within the Missionary Society organization was a two-way matter. Ovamboland sent Helsinki mostly information about current problems in the field, general information about the stage of the work, information on the various parishes, plans and suggestions, and Helsinki sent mostly decisions, instructions and requests for more information. For the present purposes the information which Ovamboland produced was more important than that sent by the central administration, because it tells about what was happening in the field.

36 Eirola, 1985, p. 58–60.
37 Eirola, 1985, p. 65–66.
38 Eirola, 1985, p. 66-69.

The two most important sets of documents are the missionaries' letters to the mission directors and the missionaries' annual reports. It is the case with both of these groups, of course, that not all the documents are equally valuable for the present purposes. In general, those missionaries who had a more comprehensive view of the work also produced more interesting documents. These include, first and foremost, the presiding missionary, the mission doctor and those missionaries who were heads of congregations and mission stations. Their annual reports could be something like twenty pages long and contain a wealth of information about the events of the previous year. At the other end of the scale are many of the lady missionaries who worked as teachers and nurses. Their annual reports were sometimes just simple "annual sentences" stating that they had worked in the same way as in the previous year. The missionaries' letters also have a similar gender aspect, the men writing about what was happening in Ovamboland while many of the women's letters are just social chatting with the mission director, telling how they are doing, how great it is to be promoting God's cause, or how beautiful the land looks now that the rains have started. The apparent gender imbalance in the source material of this research cannot therefore be regarded as a procedural fault, but is a product of the gender roles within the missionary community. The men led the work in the field and were expected to keep the mission leadership informed about what was happening, where the role of the women, with the exception of the mission doctors and school inspectors, was mostly to report about their personal lives and to produce nice stuff with a personal touch for use in missionary propaganda.

The basic question concerning the missionaries' documents obviously has to do with their value as sources. This problem has two aspects: how much did the missionaries actually know about what was happening in Ovamboland (i.e. validity), and how truthfully did they report it (i.e. reliability)? In some cases validity is a bit of a problem, but not necessarily one that would render the interpretations made here invalid. Many aspects which were studied were distinctly missionary matters, as one might say, such as their personal views, aims and working methods, while other aspects were interactions in which the missionaries participated personally, such as conflicts concerning initiation rites, wedding ox and temperance. In such matters the missionaries obviously were well informed. Concerning decisions, opinions, actions etc. on the part of the Ovambo, however, the missionaries' information was less than first-hand. As far as what they tell us about causes of conversions is concerned, for example, their information is based on what converts had told them (which was not necessarily truthful), or on something which other Africans, such as Ovambo pastors, had told them (which was an interpretation). Thus, if one were to base one's analysis of conversion only on what the missionaries said about it, one would obviously be on thin ice. But that is not how it is done here, because the aim is not only to assess the missionaries' views critically but also to take into account phenomena which the missionaries did not directly link with conversions. Missionaries were obviously the least well-informed of matters which were least within their personal circles. Conversions during labour contracts and relations between Christians and non-Christians in families belong to this category. The analysis of these phenomena is therefore bound to be somewhat more hypothetical.

The non-existence of Ovambo views in missionary documents is not quite as prevalent as the above might suggest.[39] There are documents in which missionaries tell quite directly about Ovambos' views e.g. reports on parish inspections, where they often wrote of the opinions expressed by local Christians in congregational meetings, which were held at the same time as the parish inspections. Furthermore, we come again to the question of conflicts. When missionaries report about conflicts between themselves and the Ovambo, or between Christians and non-Christians, they unintentionally tell us at the same time about the views and opinions of the African side, about those views and opinions which were so important from the Ovambo point of view that they led them to openly oppose the missionaries.

The question of the reliability of missionary documents takes us to the matter of publication. The basic assumption could be that documents which were written to be published give a less truthful picture than those which were meant for internal use.[40] From this point of view various minutes, plans, discussion papers and some reports are not a problem because they were for the missionaries' own use only. Annual reports and particularly letters are somewhat more problematic, because they were often published, in full or as extracts, in the FMS periodical or other (Christian) magazines and newspapers. There are two things which make the reliability problem fairly insignificant, however. Firstly, when one reads the missionaries' letters, one soon learns to assess which of them were primarily meant for publication and which were primarily passing information to the mission leadership. To put it in simple terms, the more references to God a letter had, the more likely it was meant for publication. Secondly, the missionaries knew that their reports and letters might be published, but they also knew that the mission leadership would edit them first, so that they would not contain anything that might compromise the mission. Therefore they could also write freely about matters that the general public was not supposed to learn about.

The missionaries' letters which are used here may be termed official. They were written by missionaries as missionaries to missionaries or to missionaries' superiors. This means that the attitudes expressed in them were hardly ever in contradiction with something which might be defined as the acceptable missionary way of thinking. In their private letters some missionaries apparently felt more free to express unorthodox views. For example, in a letter written to a friend, the newly arrived mission doctor Selma Rainio once criticized missionaries' demand that women accepting conversion must abandon their traditional dress and ornaments.[41] In official letters neither Rainio nor any other missionary ever questioned the cherished missionary duty of freeing Africans from their "indecent pagan nakedness". Letters which missionaries wrote to each other seldom questioned the hard core of prevailing missionary attitudes or ideas. Therefore, by using only this

39 Cf. McKittrick's views concerning mission records as products of both European and African contexts (McKittrick, 2003, p. 221–222, 233).

40 Cf. McKittrick, 2003, p. 220–221.

41 Kena, 2000, p. 292–293.

set of correspondence one probably slightly distorts their image, as their individual views were not necessarily quite as uniform and narrow-minded as their official correspondence would indicate. Although some nuances of missionaries' views are lost by using only internal correspondence, these letters are still better sources for the needs of this study than private letters. After all, it was these prevailing missionary ideas and views that guided the missionaries' work in Ovamboland far more than their individual, possibly dissident ideas.

The second main body of sources consists of documents of the Ovamboland colonial administration. The most relevant sets for this purpose were the native commissioners' annual reports, their correspondence with their superiors (the chief native commissioner in the first place), and the correspondence between the colonial officials and missionaries.

As far as validity and reliability are concerned, the colonial records are in many respect very similar to the missionary records. Their validity is best when they are connected with something which was an administrative matter. They give good information, for example, about the administration's view of the missionaries' role and influence, and even better information about the administration's reactions to the missionaries' activities. But again, when it comes to Ovambo actions, reactions and views, the colonial records similarly reveal mostly just selected second-hand information. In this respect the colonial records are in fact probably even less valid than the missionary documents, because the officials had fewer contacts with Africans. They usually received their information from the traditional leaders, police boys and later tribal secretaries. On the other hand, the reliability of the colonial records is in some ways better than that of the missionary ones because all the documents constituted internal administrative material which was not meant for publication. Granted, the native commissioners' annual reports are a small exception in this respect, because they were often quoted in the annual reports on the administration of South West Africa which the South African government was obliged to submit to the League of Nations.

The main asset of the colonial documents is that they balance the view which the missionaries' documents give. The aims of the colonial administration and the Finnish missionaries were very different, and to some extent contradictory, and therefore relationships between these groups were never very good. Normally relations were just workable, but often they were strained. As a consequence of this animosity, both parties report such things about the doings of the other party, or the consequences of such doings, which the party in question keeps silent about. Thus we have here two collections of subjective views which can be set against each other, and from which conclusions can be drawn after their weight as evidence has been carefully assessed. (Very much in the same way as a judge would do in court.)

Both the missionary documents and the colonial records are biassed in the sense that the voice of the main group involved in the christianization process, the Ovambo themselves, is rather seldom and imperfectly heard in them. Ovambo views and opinions concerning the process of christianization and related aspects

could be obtained by using oral information, and some semi-structured interviews with old pastors and teachers were conducted with this in mind, but their number is insufficient to be a basis for any thorough analysis. The small number of interviews was admittedly mainly a consequence of poor planning before the author's second visit to Namibia, but it was also partly caused by certain unforseen force majeure obstacles during that visit.

Interviews might indeed have given more direct access to Ovambo views concerning the questions studied here – views that might not have coincided exactly with those which the missionaries had expressed. This became evident particularly when one interviewee described certain events quite differently from what the missionaries would have done. However, most interviewees' views of events were fairly similar to those of the missionaries. If the aim of using oral information obtained from Africans is to obtain an alternative, balancing view of what happened, then the selection of interviewees is crucial.

The main reason for choosing pastors and teachers as interviewees was my idea that they would have a more comprehensive view of the causes and processes of conversion than ordinary parishioners. After all, they had taught and baptised converts. Maybe they had that comprehensive view, but many of them expressed it in a very standardised way; people converted because they wanted to gain eternal life. The standardised views expressed by most interviewees were probably caused by their (unconscious) assessment of the recipient's expectations. Although I explained who I am and what I was doing, it turned out after one interview that the interviewee had believed that I was working for the Finnish Missionary Society. It is also possible that some other interviewees assumed that this white guy who was asking questions about religion must have something to do with the missionaries, and therefore they adapted their answers to what they expected that I wanted to hear. As a consequence, their expressed views on conversion were in accordance with something that might be called an acceptable view espoused in Christian teaching.

It might have been better to collect a large group of people who had themselves been converts, and who thus could have told about their personal experiences and could have offered a variety of views on conversion, missionaries etc. The standardizing of the narratives would obviously have still presented a problem in this case, although it would probably have been less marked than in the case of religious professionals. The question of honest recollections would still have been relevant here, however. Religious conversion is a very personal choice, and it is questionable whether many informants could have told about it without letting their wish to appear in the role of devoted Christians, or rational persons, influence their narrative. This problem is emphasised still further when the interviewer is clearly an outsider from interviewee's point of view.[42] Many important aspects of conversion would obviously have remained hidden, therefore, even if converts had been interviewed.[43]

42 See, for example, Paul Thompson's comments and examples on how the fact that the interviewer and the interviewee are of different ethnic background may affect the answers given. (Thompson, 1988, p. 118–121)

43 This problem of oral evidence has been pointed out also, for example, by Meredith McKittrick (1995, p. 20)

Notwithstanding the reservations made here concerning the validity of oral information, the very limited use of it is a shortcoming within the present context. But it is not necessarily a major flaw, in view of the knowledge that exists about the christianization of the Ovambo in general. Meredith McKittrick has made two excellent studies which also deal with the causes of conversion, as pointed out earlier, and which are based primarily on a large number of interviews. Thus she has produced one interpretation based on a certain set of sources, while the present work constitutes another, based on another quite large set. Our interpretations regarding the causes of conversion are somewhat different because of the different sources used. Her interpretation emphasises the internal dynamics of Ovambo society, while the present interpretation emphasises more the external influences. This does not mean that the two views should be regarded as mutually exclusive; quite the contrary, they are complementary because they shed light on the same phenomenon from different viewpoints. In a way this work engages in a constant "dialogue" with hers, as the abundant references to the latter show. Furthermore, her studies have given much food for thought and a wealth of useful pieces of information in the course of preparing this account.

One set of sources used in this study are the records of the Lutheran parishes of Eenhana, Elim, Nakayale, Okahao, Olukonda, Oshigambo and Tsandi, which became available in microfilm form in the 1990s. These Lutheran parish records are quite unique as a set of population records in Africa. They contain large amounts of information about individual Christians, in some cases extending back to the late 19th century, but they have not yet been used much in research. They have provided some information for one study on Ovambo marriages (Tuupainen, 1970) and for one demographic and one linguistic analysis, while this is the first attempt to use them in the context of social history.

The parish records are composed of two kinds of registers: the main books gathering together all data about the individual members of the parish, i.e. date of birth (if known), baptism, confirmation, wedding, migration, death, information about children and about possible disciplinary actions, and the original registers in which all baptisms, confirmations, weddings, in-immigrations, out-migrations, deaths and disciplinary acts were recorded. The main books and the registers of baptism and in-migration were made use of here.

The Lutheran parish records made it possible to analyse the group structure (age-distribution and sex-ratio) of the converts quantitatively, albeit only for a sample of them. In spite of being based only on a sample, this still gives a more accurate picture of African converts than any previous research has been able to produce. The best thing with such an analysis is that it is based on highly objective sources and not on something which somebody has written about converts. Provided that the keepers of the records did they job properly, parish records give very reliable information about what kind of people converted to Christianity. The problem here is that all records were not kept properly, particularly at the beginning of the 20th century, and therefore reliable information from many parishes is available only from the 1930s onwards.

The relevant question concerning parish records is whether the sample used

here can be regarded as representative of the whole group of Ovambo converts. As far as the western communities (Uukwambi, Ongandjera, Uukwaluudhi and Ombalantu) are concerned this is not a problem, as the sample parishes were the only parishes in the communities and therefore their converts were the only ones. The information on the eastern communities of Ondonga and Uukwanyama is somewhat less valid, because the sample parishes were not the only ones in these communities and two, Oshigambo and Eenhana, were not even major parishes. Uukwanyama in particular is somewhat inadequately covered because Eenhana was founded only in 1937 and was a small parish in the middle of nowhere. More valid information about Kwanyama converts in general would have been available in the Engela records, as Engela was the oldest and largest of the Uukwanyama parishes, but unfortunately Engela records had not yet been microfilmed at the time of analysing the parish record information. When all the results for the various parishes are put together, however, we have a reliable picture of an Ovambo convert.

Ethnographic collections and descriptions have played a secondary role in this study, because they do not tell us much about conversions or about Ovambo-missionary relations. Therefore the information they provide about precolonial society has mostly been used only in Chapter Two. The most important of ethnographic collections is the one compiled by the former missionary Emil Liljeblad during his two years of field-work in Ovamboland in the early 1930s. This contains over 1,600 narratives about prechristian customs, kings, events, tales, myths etc. Successful use has been made of it by some Finnish and Namibian scholars, but otherwise it has been used very little, apparently because it is available only in Oshindonga and Finnish.

Although Liljeblad's collection is a rich source of information, it is not without problems. Its image of prechristian Ovambo society may be distorted by the fact that all the informants were Christian men who knew that they were speaking to a former missionary. That may have made them present the prechristian culture in somewhat negative light, or transfer Christian ideas to a prechristian context[44]. Another problem is that Liljeblad's informants were describing something which was obvious to them. Therefore their narratives do not explain the wider context of the customs they describe. This makes it difficult for a non-indigenous person to understand what they are actually talking about, and therefore there is a considerable danger of misunderstanding or misinterpreting the stories.

Another collection of an ethnographic kind which was found useful is the "*Beantwortung des fragebogens über die Rechte der Eingeborenen in den deutschen Kolonien*", published by the imperial German government in 1913. It is basically a

44 Noa Kaukungua's narrative about a story of the origins of humans is an interesting and revealing example in this respect. According to him, the original story was the following: God created four people, two men and two women, who were all black. One day God summoned all four to him. One couple came in time, and God made them white. The other couple came late, and God left them black. From then on God was only in contact with the white couple. (ELC no. 407a, p. 833–836). It is obvious that Kaukungua is making folklore out of the Hamitic myth which he had learned from the missionaries.

questionnaire about juridical customs and processes of all the indigenous peoples of German colonial empire. Information concerning the Ovambo was provided by the missionaries Martti Rautanen and August Wulfhorst. Although the Beantwortung deals with juridical matters and is rather short, it still gives a surprisingly lot of information about precolonial society.

Ethnographic writings published by missionaries have been used hesitantly and very critically, because they tend to have one considerable failing: the missionaries often let their own moralistic stance affect their descriptions. This is particularly evident when they describe the indigenous religion and the customs connected with it. On the other hand, aspects of life which were not in contradiction with Christian moral concepts, such as the economy, are described more neutrally.

That is basically the primary material which is used here. All these sets of sources have their limitations, and none of them alone would be an adequate basis for a reliable analysis. But when they are used together such a basis is created, even for the analysis of some aspects of conversions. There are still a few words to be said about the material which has been used in a very limited way, the missionaries' published writings. Apart from some ethnographic descriptions, mission literature was used when information was needed about the views and opinions which missionaries expressed in public, or about the organizing of mission work. Otherwise the mission publications have scarcely been used at all, and particularly the writings in *Suomen Lähetyssanomat*, the periodical of the Finnish Missionary Society, have been ignored almost completely. The simple reason for this cautious use of missionary books and *Lähetyssanomat* is their unmistakable propagandist nature.[45] Their main aim was to influence readers so that they would support the mission work financially.[46] Therefore they had to describe the non-Christian target cultures in negative terms in order to show that their aim to change these cultures through teaching of the Christian faith was an act of humanity. In other words – they demonized the heathens.[47]

The missionaries' descriptions of the beliefs and practices related to sickness and death illustrate well the style which they used when writing about Ovambo customs which they found unacceptable. They wrote something like this:

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45 Cf. Raiskio 1997, p. 186–187, 189–190; *Suomen Lähetyssanomat* 3/1996, p. 32–34.

46 Cf. Kontro, 1979, p. 36.

47 Demonize is a harsh word, but I think it is justified. Ari Kontro, who has studied the image of Africans in the FMS publications in the post WWII period, has come to the conclusion that up to the late 1960s the image given of most aspects of original African culture was very negative and one-sided. The writings made value judgements which were based on the missionaries' strict dichotomy between good and evil. From the late 1960s many phenomena such as polygamy and communal land ownership were described in more understanding and analytical way, but the image of the heathen was still basically very negative in the 1970s. This can be illustrated with a well-chosen example from *Suomen Lähetyssanomat*. In 1953 this journal published an article entitled "*Pakanuuden sielu*" (The soul of heathenism) by an unnamed foreign missionary, who characterized heathens as being extremely selfish, basically anti-social and fundamentally lazy pathological liars. He ended his description by saying that sometimes the difference between a heathen and an animal seemed to be very obscure. (See Kontro, 1978, p. 24–31, 40–44, 48, 53, 67–68, 71–72, 154–158; *Suomen Lähetyssanomat* 6/1953, p. 114.)

> Ovambos believed that sickness and death were caused either by enraged spirits or by witchcraft. Such superstitions made their life a misery because they always had to be cautious not to break any taboos which would have angered the spirits. They also lived in constant fear of being bewitched. When somebody fell ill or died, an *Onganga*-witch had to be called to find out whether the illness or death had been caused by spirits or witchcraft. These people were clever swindlers who used people's superstitions for their own interests. When an *Onganga* said that the illness had been caused by spirits, he was asked to perform his filthy heathen magic to appease them. It did not cure the sick person but it earned the witch a handsome reward. If the *Onganga* said that somebody had died because of witchcraft, his next task was to find the witch so that he could be punished. Now the *Onganga* was free to destroy somebody who had angered him in some way. Alternatively, he could accuse some wealthy person of witchcraft because a witch's property was confiscated and the *Onganga* could get a share of the booty. It is also known for *Ongangas* to be bribed to make accusations against innocent people.[48]

By emphasizing that people lived in constant fear, and that their beliefs were exploited by unscrupulous crooks, missionaries tried to convince readers back home that they were working for the benefit of the Ovambo in many ways; Not only were they saving these people's souls, but they were also liberating them from the fear of spirits (psychological benefit) and stopping them from being abused and harassed by malevolent individuals (social benefit). What the missionaries usually forgot to tell was that many *Ongangas* combined magic with herbal medicine, which, according to the mission doctor Selma Rainio, was effective in many cases.[49] Thus, when trying to convince their readers of the evilness of the *Onganga,* the missionaries probably made villains of many men and women who had a gift of heeling and helping people, or who at least sincerely believed that they had such a gift. But the missionaries also aimed at controlled image building when the image was created by outsiders. This was seen in 1959 when a radio reporter from *Yleisradio* (the Finnish Broadcasting Company) was coming to Ovamboland to make a report about missionary work. According to Erkki Hynönen, a missionary working in Uukwanyama at the time, the missionaries had to make sure that his report would give "a correct" (i.e. negative) image of the heathen.[50] Sometimes the missionaries' image of the Africans was so negative that the criticism rebounded on them.[51]

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48 This is naturally a simplified compilation, but these ideas can be found in the mission literature. See, for example: Rautanen, 1902, p. 7; Savola, 1916, p. 185–192; Närhi, 1929, p. 79–80, 87–88; Hopeasalmi, 1946, p. 27–29, 34, 37–45; Vapaavuori, 1948, p. 191–194; Ambomaa, 1959, p. 54–55, 60–62. (Similar descriptions can also be found in other books by missionaries and in *Lähetyssanomat*. See Kontro, 1978, p. 65–67 and Koskela, 1999, p. 47–50).

49 S. Rainio to J. Mustakallio 20 April 1912 and to U. Paunu 11 Aug. 1936, Eac17&37, AFMS, NAF.

50 E. Hynönen to E.J. Pentti 13 April 1959, Ncd1, AELCIN.

51 I do not know whether, or how often, people sent critical letters to the mission HQ in Helsinki, but at least once such criticism came directly all the way to Ovamboland by air mail. It all started with an interview of several lady missionaries in the conservative newspaper *Uusi Suomi* in March 1950. These women claimed, among other things, that heathen Ovambo were ruthless people who were

Not only did the image of the heathen that was given to outsiders have to be "correct", but this particularly applied to the image of the missionaries themselves, of their work and of its outcome. The letters which missionaries sent for publication were expected to give support for the work. Furthermore, their letters were very often heavily edited before publication. Quite many missionaries were unhappy with the way the leadership used the information they provided, and they often complained that their letters had been "mutilated" before publication. Many also felt that they were expected to give an unrealistically optimistic view of the results of the mission work.[52] The missionary Ilmari Saukkonen did not mince his words when expressing his views about writing in the mission periodical:

> "I am convinced that we missionaries are big liars. We tell beautiful stories about how heathens seek for the Word, and about their miraculous adventures when they want to join the congregations. But these stories are building material which eventually will burn down. God's cause should be promoted by sticking to the truth."[53]

But editing letters was not all. The Finnish Missionary Society also had a system of censorship, which was particularly tight in the 1940s and 1950s when Tuure Vapaavuori was mission director. Not only were missionaries expected to send anything they wanted to publish in non-missionary papers to the mission director for approval, but Vapaavuori also forbade them to write anything negative, particularly about missionaries' mutual relations, even privately to their friends or relatives.[54] Most missionaries accepted this, but not Pauli Pennanen. He refused to allow Vapaavuori to censor his writings and accused him of despotism. Eventually Pennanen had to leave his job as a missionary.[55]

Missionaries could be quite fervent in making sure that nothing which might make them appear in a negative light was published.[56] In some cases this could

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ready to kill not only their sick relatives but also anybody who had angered them. Such statements made one reader, Jouko Ponkala, send a strongly worded letter to the presiding missionary, Viktor Alho. Ponkala accused the missionaries, among other things, of trying to make the Finns believe that Africans are an inferior and despicable race. (J. Ponkala to V. Alho 2 March 1950, Serie N, AELCIN; *Uusi Suomi* 2 March 1950, p. 7)

52 E.g. E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 10 April 1917, Eac20; O. Suikkanen to M. Tarkkanen 9 March 1931, Eac30; I. Saukkonen to the Ovamboland church administration 25 March 1935, Eac36; T. Vapaavuori to K.A Paasio 4 April 1935, Eac36; T. Vapaavuori to K. A. Saarilahti 25 Jan. 1936, Eac37. All in AFMS, NAF.

53 I. Saukkonen to M. Tarkkanen 25 June 1933, Eac31, AFMS, NAF. (Transl. KM)

54 See copy T. Vapaavuori's circular to missionaries in Ovamboland and Okavango, s.d. March 1948, Eac43; Copy T. Vapaavuori to A. Keinonen 8 July 1949, Eac43; Copy T. Vapaavuori to P. Pennanen 13 Oct. 1952, Eac45; B. Eriksson to O. Vuorela 19 May 1960, Eac48. All in AFMS, NAF.

55 P. Pennanen to T. Vapaavuori 3 Sept. 1954, Eac46; Copies T. Vapaavuori to P. Pennanen 13 Oct 1952 and 22 Aug. 1954, Eac45 and 46; Copy P. Pennanen to B. Eriksson 14 Nov. 1954, Eac46; Copy T. Vapaavuori to V. Teinilä 6 Nov. 1954, Eac46; Copies T. Vapaavuori to B. Eriksson 18 Jan. and 12 Feb. 1955, Eac46; Copy T. Vapaavuori to field administration board 25 Feb. 1955, Eac46; B. Eriksson to T. Vapaavuori 12 Feb. 1955, Eac46. All in AFMS, NAF.

56 This can be illustrated with an example. In 1960 a missionary by the name of Löytty wrote an article which was meant to be published in a Lutheran newspaper. The presiding missionary, Eriksson, checked the article, approved it and sent it to Helsinki. Then he read it for a second time

mean that they also censored writings by non-missionaries. Thus, Ernst Stals promised missionaries that they could check his manuscript for "*Die aanraking tussen blankes en Ovambo's*" before publication so that it would not contain anything that might compromise the mission.[57] All in all, therefore, the missionaries' strong tendency to create and control images of Africans and of mission work means that their publications are probably the least truthful source material for the actual realities behind these images.

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and realized that some sentences, even if edited, could be misunderstood as projecting a negative image of missionaries' activities. That was a good enough reason for Eriksson to send an expensive telegram to Helsinki to warn the FMS information secretary about the matter. (B. Eriksson to O. Vuorela 19 May 1960, Eac48, AFMS, NAF.)

57 A. Hukka to O. Vuorela 23 Sept. 1961, Eac48, AFMS, NAF.

The Context – Ovamboland and Ovambo society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries

The land and its economy

There are at least two ways of defining Ovamboland: the "ethnographic" Ovamboland, i.e. the Etosha Pan flood plain area which was inhabited by the Ovambo people in pre-colonial times, reaching from Etosha Pan in the south to approximately 16°S in the north and from Kaokoland and the Kunene River in the west to approximately 18°E in the east, thus covering areas in the present-day Northern Namibia and Southern Angola,[1] and the "administrative" Ovamboland, i.e. the Ovamboland Reserve of South West Africa, which covers the southern portion of the ethnographic Ovamboland from Etosha Pan to the SWA-Angola border. Of the 15 or 17 Ovambo communities in ethnographic Ovamboland, seven (Ondonga, Uukwanyama, Uukwambi, Ongandjera, Uukwaluudhi, Ombalantu and Uukolonkadhi) fall wholly or partly within the administrative area of that name.

The Southern Etosha flood plain, i.e. the former Ovamboland Reserve, is a broad highland plain about 1100 metres above sea level and sloping slightly southward. The area is part of the Mega Kalahari, and its soils are generally of a sandy nature and poor in plant nutrients. Loamy soils or subsurface humus can mostly be found in flood-water courses and along their banks. The subsoil is saline in many places.[2]

Water is, and always has been, a problem in Ovamboland. There is not much of it and the little rain which does fall is received within a few months – except in randomly occurring drought years when there may be practically no rain at all. The rainfall in Ovamboland in normal years is nevertheless better than in central and southern Namibia, the average annual figures in eastern and northern Ovamboland being between 500 and 600 mm and those in the western and southern parts of the area between 400 and 500 mm, whereas those in the more southern parts of Namibia vary between 0 and 500 mm.[3] The rainy season normally be-

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1 Concerning the territorial extent of pre-colonial Ovamboland see Nitsche, 1913, p. 11–12; Siiskonen, 1990, Appendix 1 p. 263; Williams, 1991, p. ii and map 1 p. x.

2 Tönjes, 1911, p. 6; Nitsche, 1913, p. 29, 33; Savola, 1924, p. 6–8; Erkkilä & Siiskonen, 1992, p. 20, 43, 46.

3 Erkkilä & Siiskonen, 1992, fig. 4, p. 21.

gins in November or December and lasts until April. Most of the water is received in short, heavy downpours. The period from May to September is almost totally rainless and during this dry season the people and cattle are dependent on water in wells and waterholes, which can be dug in some places. A serious lack of water is not at all uncommon at the end of dry season, however,[4] and frequently coincides with hot weather. October is usually the hottest month, when temperatures can reach up to +40ºC, while June and July are the coldest months, with maximum temperatures around +25ºC and minima under +10ºC. The average annual temperature in Ondonga is +22.5ºC.[5]

Apart from local rains, Ovamboland water resources are increased by water from the southern Angola highlands. Heavy rains there cause floods, *efundjas*, of which Ovamboland in Namibia gets its share. During the rains, flood begins to flow southwards from the Cuvelai catchment area in watercourses known as *oshanas*. These shallow channels (usually 1 to 2 metres in depth and from a couple of metres to over a kilometre in width) are a distinctive element in the landscape of the western and central parts of Ovamboland, running from north to south or from north-west to south-east and separated from each other by slightly elevated terraces. South of Ondonga they unite into one periodic river, the Ekuma, which then runs into the Etosha Salt Pan. The floods normally occur during January and February, and if they have been unusually abundant, there may still be some water left in the oshana beds as late as in June.[6] The *efundjas* are rather unpredictable source of water, though, so that between 1941 and 1960, for example, there were nine years when there were either no floods at all or the floods were very weak. On the other hand, the record floods of 1954 brought over ten times more water to the south than those in a normal year.[7]

Because of the soils and climate, the vegetation of Ovamboland falls into the category of wooded savanna, the western parts belonging to the Mopane Savanna and eastern parts to the Tree Savanna and Woodland.[8] Apart from the differences in vegetation caused by natural phenomena that vary from area to area, there are also some differences between inhabited and uninhabited areas. In the inhabited areas a considerable proportion of the land has been cleared for fields. In the *oshana* region these fields are mostly situated on the lower and middle slopes of the higher ground between the *oshanas* themselves, while the upper slopes are unsuited for crop cultivation and are covered with natural vegetation such as Mopane trees, fan palms and Acacias. Outside the flood periods the *oshanas* are covered with grass. In eastern Ovamboland, beyond the *oshana* region, the fields are scattered but close to each other.[9]

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4 Tönjes, 1911, p. 13–18; Savola, 1924, p. 8–10; Erkkilä & Siiskonen, 1992, fig. 14, p. 44.

5 Tönjes, 1911, p. 17; Elonheimo, 1967, fig. 17, p. 36.

6 Tönjes, 1911, p. 18, 21; Nitsche, 1913, p. 63–66; Erkkilä & Siiskonen, 1992, p. 43, 45.

7 Stengel, 1963, fig. 2 p. 372, p. 375.

8 Erkkilä & Siiskonen, 1992, p. 47.

9 Tönjes, 1911, p.6; Elonheimo, 1967, p. 73–80; Kreike, 1996, p. 249–250. Concerning the pattern of settlement (in the 1960s) see also 1:250 000 Maps of Namibia (second edition 1975) sheet 1714 (Oshakati) and sheet 1716 (Eenhana). On changes in the settlement pattern outside the oshana area after WW II, see Erkkilä, 2001, particularly p. 71–73, 76–81.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the areas inhabited by the Ovambo communities were separated by wide, uninhabited belts of thin Mopane-dominated forests, but with the increase in population and the clearance of new fields, these forests have practically disappeared and the areas inhabited by the different communities have grown together. For example, the forest belt between Ondonga and Uukwanyama was said to have been some 60 km wide in the 1860s, but by the mid 1960s it had been reduced just to some scattered plots of forests. East of the inhabited areas (i.e. east of Ondonga and Uukwanyama) there were more dense forests with Zambezi Teak as the dominant species. These forests seem still to have been largely untouched in the 1960s.[10]

The Ovambo economy, which of course dependent on natural conditions, was mostly based on agriculture and cattle raising. The basic economic unit was the family, consisting usually of a man, his wife or wives and their children. The family lived in a homestead (*egumbo*) which was situated in the field that had been allocated to the family. Seen from outside an Ovambo homestead was a circular wooden palisade between 15 and 60 metres in diameter, the size depending on the wealth of the owner. The outer palisade had two entrances – the main entrance facing northeast and a second entrance facing west. Inside the outer palisade there was a labyrinth of narrow, stockaded passages and small stockaded yards with small round huts. The labyrinthine passages were intended to confuse both potentially hostile strangers and evil spirits. At the centre of the homestead was a circular, open area – the meeting place. Around it were the four main living quarters – the husband's, the first wife's, the second wife's and that of the junior wives – each with its own yard and huts for sleeping, cooking, storage etc. Nearer to the outer palisade were the cattle kraals, granaries, a place for stamping grain, the adolescent boys' quarters and the visitors' quarters. Such an *egumbo* was moved from one location to another inside family's field at intervals not exceeding three to four years.[11]

The field which an Ovambo family used for agriculture was not owned by the family but by the community, because individual land ownership was not known. The kings were the trustees of all arable land[12] and gave (sold) to their regional

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10 Elonheimo, 1967, p. 58–64; Erkkilä & Siiskonen, 1992, p. 47, 174; 1:250 000 Map of Namibia (second edition 1975) sheet 1716 (Eenhana). Concerning the different tree species, see also Tönjes, 1911, p. 6–12 and Nitsche, 1913, p. 70–76.

11 There was naturally no single way of constructing an egumbo, and its structure could vary depending on whether the husband had one or more wives, for example. For some descriptions of egumbos, see Tönjes, 1911, p. 48–56; Savola, 1924, p. 44–49; Loeb, 1962, p. 128–132 and plates G–K p. 334–337.

12 There are conflicting opinions about whether the kings were owners of all the land or just trustees of the communal land. Lebzelter and Loeb and some missionaries see them as owners of land, but according to Delius this is a misconception, and kings just appeared to onlookers to be owners because they had the right to revoke land allocations. Delius' view is supported by Bruwer, Lehmann and Williams. On the whole, though, the question ”owner or trustee” is more or less academic, at least as long as a generally accepted definition of ownership is lacking. (See Beantwortung des Fragebogens über die Rechte der Eingeborenen in den deutschen Kolonien – Ovambogebiet, Stamm der Ovakuanjama von A Wulfhorst, 1913, p. 32, Frage no. 40; Närhi, 1930,

headmen the rights to allocate fields to married men. The allottee paid a fee for the right to cultivate the field. Earlier it was usually one to five head of cattle, and in the 1920s either money or goods worth some 60 to 80 shillings. No fee was payable if a man cleared a new field in a previously uninhabited area. In theory the allottee's right to use the field lasted until his death, when the field was returned to the headman for re-allocation. Land tenure was much less secure in practice, though, because kings had far-reaching rights to oust people from fields, except during the period between sowing and harvesting, when this was not allowed.[13] According to Salokoski, the formal reason for ousting a person from the land was originally an offence of some kind, but later, in the early twentieth century, the kings no longer needed any formal legitimisation for intervening in land usage.[14]

Even though women, at least normally, had no independent access to land without being married, they were not necessarily silent partners as far as the use of their family's fields was concerned. First wives considered themselves "co-owners" of farms and had to be consulted by their husbands in land matters.[15] The household field was divided between the husband and his wife/wives, with the husband and the first wife usually receiving the best plots. Junior members of the household, such as adolescent sons and daughters and married sons who had not yet been allotted a field of their own by the headman, could also have their own portions of the field. All the sections of the field were usually cultivated by the women and girls of the household under the husband's supervision, and the crop obtained in each section was the property of the person to whom the section had been given. Wives used their share of the crop to feed themselves and their children, but because their granaries often ran out before the new harvest, they often received grain from their husband during the cultivating season. Junior members of the household could sometimes sell some of their excess grain either to their parents or to outsiders.[16]

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p. 11; Lebzelter, 1934, p. 239; Lehmann, 1954/55, p. 307–308; Bruwer, 1961, p. 32; Loeb, 1962, p. 42–43; Delius, 1984, p. 123–124. Williams, 1991, p. 43; Becker & Hinz, 1995, p. 65.)

13 Tönjes, 1911, p. 120; Lebzelter, 1934, p. 239; Dammann, 1972/73, p. 34–35; Borkowsky, 1975, p. 61–62; Delius, 1984, p. 123–126;

14 Salokoski, 1992, p. 367. It should be noted that Salokoski's analysis of this particular subject is based on rather weak evidence. She makes reference to two published writings by Finnish missionaries, one from the 1910s and the other from the 1920s. These may tell something about the kings' role in land usage in the early twentieth century, but they are not adequate evidence concerning the situation in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, because the Finnish missionaries obviously favoured individual land ownership rather than the Ovambo system of land tenure, it is possible that their writings, particularly those that were published, may exaggerate the evils caused by the non-individual land system and the role of the kings in it.

15 Kreike, 1996, p. 258–259. See also Loeb, 1962, p. 137.

16 Borkowsky, 1975, p. 63; Williams,1991, p. 44–45; Becker & Hinz, 1995, p. 65–66; Kreike, 1996, p. 254–262. Even though it seems to be a generally accepted "fact" that only women participated in agricultural work, the issue is not totally uncontroversial. The Swedish Captain T.G. Een, who visited Ovamboland in the 1860s, claims, for example, that men also participated in work in the field. He made a particular note of this because he considered such a practice to be highly unusual in Africa (see Een, 1872, p. 82). Also several of McKittrick's informants (1995, p. 237) claimed that men had always worked in the fields. Kreike (1996, p. 201) seems to suggest that the idea that Ovambo men did not participate in agricultural work may have been an invention by European anthropologists and colonial officials who needed a justification for their claim that the men's

The agricultural year usually began in late September or early October. The Ovambo methods of cultivation were very labour-intensive, and therefore the women were busy tending the fields for the next six months. The first task was to clear the field of the stubble from the previous harvest. After this the soil was prepared with little hoes. The earth was shaped into rows of little mounds or hillocks into which seeds were planted in due course. The mounds lifted the seeds above the natural ground level and protected them from the floodwater. Because of the system of shifting cultivation, the fields were "fertilized" only when the homestead had been moved to a new place and the dung which had accumulated in the cattle enclosure could be used.

The main crops were red sorghum (*iilyalyaka*) and millet (*omahangu*), in addition to which some vegetables such as beans, pumpkins and melons were grown. It was essential to plant the seeds at the right time, because a successful harvest was dependent on adequate and timely rains, and therefore the approximate time of planting was decided by the king and the actual day by the head of the household. The problem here was the possibility that the first rains (in November) might sometimes be followed by a dry period in December, so that seeds planted just before the first rains could fail to germinate. On the other hand, if planting was postponed until the rains were a certainty, the growing season might remain too short.

If planting succeeded, the women's toil continued. During the growing season they had to hoe the fields constantly in order to weed them and keep the soil light. In April, when the rains ended and the *iilyalyaka* and *omahangu* had reached a height of some two to three metres, it was time to harvest the crop. The ears of grain were broken off and allowed to dry for a few days. After threshing, the grain was mixed with ash in order to protect it from insects. Finally it was stored in large clay-sealed grain baskets. Then the cattle and goats were let into the fields to feed on the stalks.[17]

Occasionally a crop could fail entirely or almost entirely because of inadequate rains. If a serious crop failure had been preceded by a poor crop in the previous year, or was combined with assaults by noxious insects, the situation could turn into a famine. Nutritional stringencies or local famines were not at all uncommon in Ovamboland, and also some quite devastating famines occurred. There were serious famines in the nineteenth century, in 1878–1879, for example, and locally in Ondonga in 1897–1898,[18] but the most devastating ones occurred in the early

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engagement in migrant labour did not harm the subsistence agriculture in Ovamboland. The missionaries' views on this matter seem to have been somewhat ambiguous, however, for the missionary Savola wrote in 1916 that "Men do often help, although field work in Ondonga is predominantly women's duty". On the other hand, missionaries occasionally felt the need to claim that it was thanks to them that Christian men, unlike heathen ones, participated in agricultural work. In other words, the missionaries were clearly trying to create an image of lazy African men in order to emphasize the good work they were doing (see Copy Presiding Missionary W. Kivinen to the Secretary for SWA 8 March 1937, Eaj, AELCIN; Savola, 1916, p. 110; Erola, s.d., p. 41). On the colonial image of loitering African men, see Becker, 1995, p. 57.

17 On methods of cultivation etc., see Tönjes, 1911, p. 10–11, 63–66; Koivu, 1925, p. 46–73; Loeb, 1962, p. 151–155.

18 Peltola, 1958, p. 64–65, 103–104. William Clarence-Smith has compiled a list of drought years in the area based on published data. Drought years do not necessarily mean famines, but serious droughts may hint in that direction (see Clarence-Smith, 1974).

Agriculture in Ovamboland was the domain of the women, while the men were responsible for cattle raising. This young woman in Ombalantu, possibly a junior wife, is stamping grain.
(Photo by courtesy of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission)

twentieth century, in 1908–1909 and 1915–1916. The 1908–1909 famine killed hundreds of people, while the 1915–1916 famine, *Ondjala yawekomba* (the famine that swept), killed thousands, thus making it the worst famine in living memory Ovamboland.[19] No exact mortality figures exist, but the famine was obviously devastating; According to some estimations by Finnish missionaries, over 10 per cent of the Ondonga population had died because of the famine by the end of 1915, while in Uukwambi mortality was estimated to have been around 25 per cent. In Uukwanyama the death rate was between 25 and 45 per cent according to later estimations by the Rhenish missionaries.[20] There was a serious famine again in 1929–1930, but it did not cause massive fatalities, thanks to the "food for work"-projects organized by the colonial government.[21]

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19 On the 1908–1909 famine see M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1908 (Olukonda) & E. Nenye's Annual Report 1908 (Ondangua), mmm 20 Jan. 1909, Appendices 1 and 6, Hha5, AFMS, NAF; Mmm 24 Feb. 1909 §2, Hha5, AFMS, NAF; *Berichte der Rheinischen Missions-Gesellschaft* 8/1908 p. 172–173, 1/1909 p. 20, 4/1909 p. 97, 12/1909 p. 281–284; Tönjes, 1911, p. 14–16. On the 1915–1916 famine see e.g. Hayes, 1992, p.199–207; McKittrick, 1995, p. 76–78; McKittrick, 2002, p. 144–151; Gewald, 2003, p. 216–220. For more about famines and their effects on christianization, see chapter "Beginnings of the mass conversions...".

20 K. Björklund to M. Tarkkanen 3 Jan. 1916 and K. Petäjä to M. Tarkkanen 27 March 1916, Eac20, AFMS, NAF; Wulfhorst, A, Der Kriegzug der Portugiesen gegen Mandume (typescript), s.d., p. 9 and Wulfhorst, A, Erlebnisse und Errinnerungen aus S.W. Afrika in der Zeit des Weltkriegs (typescript), s.d., p. 12, C/k:22, AVEM; Kreike, 1996, p. 93. (According to Siiskonen [1998, p. 230], the "sweeping famine" killed over 20,000 people in Ovamboland, some 13 to 20 per cent of the population.

21 On the 1929–1930 famine, see e.g. Hayes, 1992, p. 309–317; Hayes, 1998, p. 117–146.

Cattle raising and pastoralism was the other main economic activity of the Ovambo. Both small and large species of livestock were kept, the smaller animals, mainly goats, being raised for meat, whereas the cattle were slaughtered only on great occasions or at times of famine.[22] Instead, the cattle had other uses. The milk was consumed in the form of either sour milk or butter,[23] the stomachs provided material for *etetas* (the front aprons which were the main item of both men's and women's clothing), and the hides were used for making broad belts. Both cattle stomach *etetas* and leather belts had become luxury items by the early 1900s.[24] Cattle were also a medium of exchange and a currency standard. As explained above, they were used for paying the land allocation fees, and the fines imposed on offenders, for example, were defined in head of cattle.[25] Furthermore, some relico-ritualistic aspects were attached to the cattle. In desperate situations oxen could be sacrificed in order to appease the spirits, e.g. to cure serious illnesses, to end droughts or to remove curses.[26] There were also so-called "seer cows" which were believed to be able to reveal threatening dangers.[27] And finally, of course, a large herd was a manifestation of a person's wealth and high social status.[28]

According to Lebzelter, the Ovambo had two types of cattle: a smaller, local race and the larger "Herero" cattle which were less resistant to rinderpest.[29] There are some conflicting pieces of information on Ovambo wealth in terms of cattle. The missionary Pettinen claimed that prosperous Ndonga households in the early 1890s had between ten and twenty head of cattle, while poorer ones had only a few. This may be an underestimate, because Estermann reports with reference to the Angolan part of Ovamboland in the 1950s that in spite of the decrease in the herds, there were people who owned a thousand head of cattle, and even the proprietors of medium status had herds numbering in the hundreds. On the other hand, Loeb, with reference to the SWA part of Uukwanyma, claims that an average man might have had fifty head of cattle.[30] Kings were obviously great cattle owners, and it was estimated that Mandume ya Ndemufayo, the last king of Uukwanyma, for example, owned at least seven or eight thousand head of cattle in the 1910s.[31]

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22 Savola, 1924, p. 139; Koivu, 1925, p. 134; Hahn, 1928, p. 34–35; Loeb, 1962, p. 147.

23 Loeb, 1962, p. 148.

24 Tönjes, 1911, p. 40–42.

25 E.g. Beantwortung des Fragebogens... Ovambogebiet von M. Rautanen, 1913, p. 11, Fragen 57,58, 60.

26 E.g. Hopeasalmi, 1946, p. 49–50; Aarni, 1982, p. 45–46; Hiltunen, 1986, p. 144–146; Hiltunen, 1993, p. 75, 79–81.

27 Estermann, 1976, p. 141; Hiltunen, 1993, p. 184–187.

28 Estermann, 1976, p. 141; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 55–56; Williams, 1991, p. 42; Salokoski, 1992, p. 138. ** Williams emphasizes the economic and religious role of cattle and argues that Siiskonen has overemphasized the social aspect. Be that as it may, the social aspect of cattle ownership was obviously very important even to the owner's posthumous reputation, as the teacher Adolf Sidiue from Uukwanyama explained in the 1930's: "When a person is in this world, he is seeking property. He is seeking it because of his honour, so that people will not laugh at him when he is dead for not leaving anything to be inherited. If a person does not leave any property to be inherited, he is laughed at and he is said to have been measly and good-for-nothing." (ELC no. 320, p. 751). (Transl. KM)

29 Lebzelter, 1934, p. 212. See also Hayes, 1992, p. 33–43.

30 Loeb, 1962, p. 149; Estermann, 1976, p. 137; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 55.

31 Loeb, 1962, p. 46.

Whatever the average size of a herd may have been, the wealth of the Ovambo in terms of cattle was less at the very beginning of the twentieth century than it had been in the early 1890s. This reduction was caused by the 1897 rinderpest disaster. There is no reliable information concerning the extent of the disaster, but it is estimated that over 90 per cent of the cattle died.[32] Such a sudden decrease in wealth could not pass over without some unpleasant consequences. There was a rise in violence because people attempted to regain their wealth by raiding other people's cattle.[33] The rinderpest also increased the differences in wealth among the Ovambo, as the kings and some members of the Uukwanyama and Ondonga elites had at least some of their cattle inoculated by the missionaries, so that their loss was less than for most of their subjects, who lost everything.[34] It is also possible that the rinderpest enhanced hostility towards the missionaries working in Ovamboland.[35]

All activities connected with cattle raising were the domain of the men and followed the cycle of the agricultural year. The small livestock was kept near the family homestead all year round, and its herding was the responsibility of the small boys, while the cattle were herded near the homestead only during the rainy season. When they had finished feeding on the stalks in April and a festival had been organized for their admiration, most of the herds were send to cattle posts outside the inhabited area, usually some 50 to 150 kilometres from the homesteads, where there was better pasturage and watering possibilities. The herds belonging to several proprietors were normally collected together and entrusted to one professional herdsman, who was responsible for their well-being and safety at the cattle post. The herdsman was assisted by adolescent boys from the proprietors' homesteads. The herds remained at the cattle post until the next rainy season, or in some cases even longer.[36]

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32 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 164; Hayes, 1992, p. 103–104; Kreike, 1996, p. 40. ** It is not known how long it took to recover from the rinderpest disaster, but Kreike has estimated that the Uukwanyma herds had recovered quite well by 1910, and the oral tradition which McKittrick used also recounts that communities recovered fairly rapidly. On the other hand, the missionary Kalle Koivu wrote in the 1920's that people still reminisced with longing about the plenitude of their pre-rinderpest herds (see Koivu, 1925, p. 144; McKittrick, 1995, p. 76; Kreike, 1996, p. 48).

33 Hayes, 1992, p. 111; McKittrick, 1995, p. 74; Kreike, 1996, p. 46; McKittrick, 2002, p. 121–122, 136–137.

34 Eirola, 1992, p. 97–98, 282; Hayes, 1992, p. 102–104; Kreike, 1996, p. 46–47; McKittrick, 2002, p. 119–120.

35 According to Patricia Hayes, there was increasing hostility towards the Rhenish missionaries working in Uukwanyama in 1897. She attributes this hostility to rinderpest and sees two possible connections. Firstly, there was a belief that the rinderpest was a product of the white man's activities. Secondly, she sees the hostility as an attempt by the Uukwanyama elite to find outside scapegoats in a situation which might have caused social upheaval and thus had endangered the position of this elite class. There was also increased hostility towards the Finnish missionaries in Ondonga in 1897, but this hardly had much to do with rinderpest. According to Albin Savola, the hostility had already begun to increase at the end of 1896, i.e. well before the outbreak of rinderpest in Ovamboland or in any surrounding area, possibly on account of suspicions that the missionaries were plotting with the Germans to help them take over Ovamboland (see A. Savola to J. Mustakallio 11 Dec. 1897, Eac9, AFMS, NAF; A. Savola's Annual Report 1897, mmm 5 Jan 1898, Appendix 1, Hha3, AFMS, NAF; Hayes, 1992, p. 106–108).

36 Koivu, 1925, p. 123–128; Loeb, 1962, p. 147–150; Borkowsky, 1975, p. 44–45, 65; Estermann, 1976, p. 137–138; Williams, 1991, p. 42–43.

Besides agriculture and cattle raising there were other economic activities such as fishing, hunting, handicraft production and trade. Fishing was possible only in flood years, the season commencing when the water level in the *oshanas* began to drop. The fish were caught either with traps or by spearing.[37]

Unlike fishing, big game hunting in pre-colonial Ovamboland was not merely a way of obtaining food, but also had other economic and even social functions. Elephants in particular were considered to be royal property and were initially hunted mainly for status, the ivory being used to make objects which indicated their bearer's wealth and high status in society. Similarly, giraffe were hunted partly because their stomachs were used to make the front aprons worn by women of high rank. Big game hunting became commercialized in the 1860s, when the Ovambo had first entered into trade with Europeans and ivory was used to buy imported goods from foreign traders.[38] The volume of commercial hunting had begun to decrease by the 1880s, however, because of a decline in the big game populations, and the commercial aspect appears to have been practically non-existent by the 1920s at the latest, so that big game, too, was now hunted mainly for meat.[39]

The method and organization of the hunting varied depending on whether it was performed in open country (inside the inhabited area) or in the forest. Smaller game, such as hare, steenbok and deer, was hunted in open country either by individuals using traps or by small groups using bows and poisoned arrows. Big game hunting in the forest was organized in the form of hunting expeditions. The season for big game hunting began in April or in May, with the king's hunting expedition, which lasted from one to two weeks, after which several other expeditions organized by the king or nobles were sent out into the forests. As kudus, springboks, giraffes and elephants were hunted during the dry season, the hunting was concentrated in the vicinity of water places. The prey was slain with poisoned arrows, and later with rifles, and the meat was dried in the sun before the expedition returned back home.[40]

The two remaining economic activities, handicraft production and trade, were partly connected with each other. Hand-made objects such as tools were mostly produced in households for their own use, but there were also craftsmen who produced items for sale. The products of the most talented wood-carvers were in demand outside their households, too. Similarly, drums were made by specialised craftsmen. In the field of pottery, some women acquired such skills that they were known throughout the land for their products. None of them was a full-time potter, though, as they all practised their craft alongside their domestic duties.[41] Another craft which was mostly the domain of women was basket making, which be-

37 Tönjes, 1911, p. 78–80; Koivu, 1925, p. 160–162.
38 Loeb, 1962, p. 159; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 59–60, 200.
39 Savola, 1924, p. 140–141; Koivu, 1925, p. 162–167; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 200–201.
40 Tönjes, 1911, p. 80–81; Loeb, 1962, p. 158–162; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 58–59.
41 Koivu, 1925, p. 156–157; Loeb, 1962, p. 194–195, 199, 201; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 60–61.

came a small-scale industry under the missionaries, when schoolgirls would produce baskets for sale in order to finance their schools.[42]

The most specialized of all crafts in Ovamboland was metal smelting, and the smiths were the only group of craftsmen for whom "their craft sometimes was their only business"[43]. It appears that smithery was practised mostly in Ondonga and Uukwanyama. The Ndonga smiths were specialized in making copper objects, such as bracelets and anklets, while the Kwanyma smiths made objects of iron, e.g. hoes, axe blades and spear heads. This regional specialization was caused by the availability of raw materials. The Ndonga bought copper from the San, who mined the ore in present-day Otavi region south of Ondonga, and who acknowledged the dominion of the king of Ondonga over their area, while the Kwanyama smiths mined the iron ore themselves in the Cassinga area north of Uukwanyama.[44]

Not all the smiths were simple craftsmen, however, as some of them had "supernatural" aspects to their status. This was true at least in Uukwanyama, where there were both ordinary smiths and master smiths (*Osivinda*), the latter group being on a par with healers because they, too, possessed magical powers. One could become a master smith only through initiation, and the master smith's work was taboo in the sense that no outsider, apart from apprentices, was allowed to watch it.[45] Thus the smiths enjoyed a high social status in Uukwanyama. They were respected, or even possibly feared, just as healers were. It is interesting that the situation seems to have been quite different in other communities. According to Koivu, it was only in Uukwanyama that respectable persons could become smiths, whereas elsewhere smiths were considered to be members of a lower cast, and therefore they were all non-Ovambos.[46]

Handicraft products had been important items in Ovambo trade, although not the only ones, before the European influence on trading. Siiskonen divides mid-nineteenth century Ovambo trade relations into three categories according to the geographical extent of the trade: local trade within the various Ovambo communities, regional trade between Ovambo communities, and finally long-distance trade between the Ovambo and neighbouring peoples.[47]

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42 Concerning the sale of baskets made at the Engela girls' school, for example, see S. Hirvonen's Annual Report 1929, mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 25 & ibid. 1930, mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 20, Hha11, AFMS, NAF. On methods of basket making, see e.g. Loeb, 1962, p. 196–197.

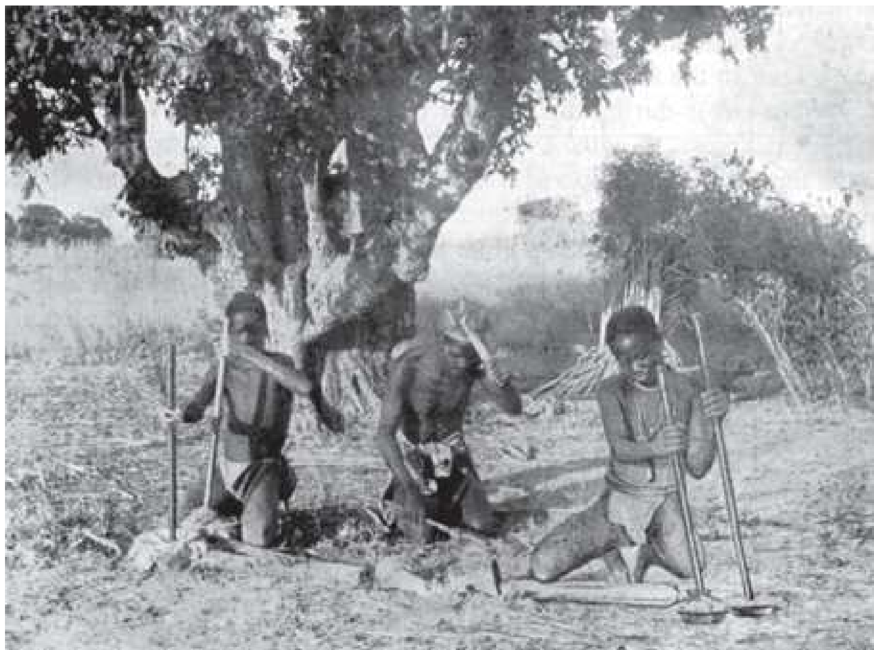
43 Koivu, 1925, p. 154. Koivu refers to the fact that all other craftsmen were also engaged in agriculture or animal husbandry.

44 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 61–63.

45 Sckär, Karl, Ovamboland, s.d., p. 107, AVEM; Estermann, 1976, p. 145. According to Loeb's observations, the belief that master smiths had magical powers still existed in the 1940s (Loeb, 1962, p. 192).

46 Koivu, 1925, p. 154–155. ** The same scorn for smiths was also noted by Gabriel Asikainen, who tried to organize vocational training in the 1920's. The higher social status of smiths in Uukwanyama may have been one reason why indigenous smithery appears to have survived longer there than in other communities. The rapid disappearance of native blacksmiths in all the other communities was noted by the native commissioner Hahn in the late 1920s (see G. Asikainen to M. Tarkkanen 15 April 1922, Eac23, AFMS, NAF; Hahn, C.H.L, Tribal Customs – Ovamboland (manuscript), 1927, p. 66–67, 2/37, A450, NAN).

47 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 68.



A Kwanyama blacksmith at work around 1900. The Ovambo smiths were not only known for their high-quality iron and copper products, which were even exported beyond Ovamboland, but some of them were believed by the Kwanyama to be powerful healers as well. (Tönjes, Ovamboland, 1911)

The local trade was governed by household needs and was primarily confined to household-produced essentials such as handicrafts and foodstuffs. Food was bought and sold particularly at times when the harvests had been destroyed over limited areas. Local trade was fairly irregular, uncontrolled and unorganized.[48]

Regional trade was similarly rather unorganized. There were no market places, and the exchange of goods was carried on by individuals who went on trading journeys to other communities, travelling from homestead to homestead. These journeys took place during the dry season, between harvesting and planting, because the traders were common people whose main economic activity was agriculture. Merchants as a separate occupational group did not exist in Ovamboland. Unlike local trade, however, regional trade was strictly controlled by the kings, who had all the established transport routes leading to their communities guarded, so that any outsider entering a king's domain for the purpose of trade was expected to present him with a gift. Similar presents were expected from those leaving their own territory for a trading journey.[49]

The main articles exchanged in regional trade were products which could not be produced in the households, or which were unobtainable in some communities.

48 Ibid. p. 69–70.
49 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 70–73, 77.

Salt from the Etosha Salt Pan or iron and copper products were the most eagerly exchanged goods, but trade also took place in such items as finer pottery, woodwork and medicinal herbs. Grain was also bought and sold regionally, but only when harvests in one or more communities had failed to the extent that self-sufficiency could not be attained locally. Some luxury goods were also traded on a regional basis, the most important of these being tobacco, which was not only an item of merchandise, but also a medium of payment.[50] By the early twentieth century at the latest, items of European clothing and European cloths appear to have become available for trading, and also for use as means of payment.[51]

It was the Ovambo who were the initiators of long-distance trade with their neighbouring communities, sending regular caravans to surrounding communities, whereas the neighbours' trading ventures into Ovamboland were rare. Like regional trade, long-distance trade was also strictly controlled by the kings, who decided on the number, timing and destinations of the caravans and also demanded part of the proceeds for themselves.[52]

The most important directions of long-distance trade were to the south and north. The southern trade was carried on mostly by the Ndonga, through connections with the Herero, who based their economy on cattle raising, and with the San, who were hunters and gatherers. The Ovambo traders bought copper ore from the San and paid for it with metal products, tobacco and pottery. They also sold metal products such as iron spearheads, knives and copper beads in Hereroland, while the most important goods imported from there were cattle, bought for breeding purposes. In the north, the Ovambo traded particularly with the Nkhumbi and Nyaneka communities to the north of the Kunene River. This northern trade appears to have been mostly in the hands of the Kwanyama, who sold salt, which was not locally obtainable in north, and also iron and copper products, while cattle and tobacco were the main purchases that the traders brought back.[53]

The long-distance trading by the Ovambo in the south survived into the early twentieth century,[54] despite the fact that the Germans had taken over Hereroland in the late nineteenth century, and that two new phenomena, i.e. trade with Europeans and migrant labour, had by this time become important part of the Ovambo economic strategy.[55] Things obviously changed after 1915, however, when the South Africans established their rule both in South West Africa proper and in Ovamboland. The new regime soon issued several ordinances which attacked the two basic prerequisites for Ovambo-Herero trade, i.e. the free movement of people

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50 Ibid. p. 72–73.

51 On regional trade of clothes see Tönjes, 1911, p. 46, 85 and Savola, 1916, p. 148. On clothes and cloths as mediums of exchange see e.g. E. Liljeblad to J. Mustakallio 23 May 1913, Eac18, AFMS, NAF; Hayes, 1992, p. 150 including footnote 195.

52 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 76–77.

53 Ibid. p. 77–82.

54 Ibid. p. 227.

55 See chapters "Violence in..." and "Migrant labour and colonial rule".

and transportation of cattle between the areas.[56] The long-distance trade in the north may have survived a little longer, as the Ovambo were still reported to have bought cattle from Angola in the late 1930s.[57] But in 1943 the Portuguese authorities in Angola forbade both the sale of cattle to Ovambo living in South West Africa and the transportation of livestock across the border.[58]

To close this discussion, a note concerning livestock as merchandise should be made. As the paragraphs above show, cattle were important as items of long-distance trade in the mid-nineteenth century, but were not normally traded locally or regionally[59]. Another point worth noting is that cattle were only bought by the Ovambo, and not sold. In both these respects the situation appears to have altered by or in the twentieth century. Both Tönjes and Koivu refer to trading in cattle which obviously was either local or regional.[60] The idea that cattle could be sold for grain was evident during the famine in the early 1930's, but it may already have been so during earlier famines.[61] The slaughtering large livestock for the sale of

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56 The free, legal movement of people to the south ended in 1922, when the new Native Administration Proclamation prescribed that any African travelling in SWA outside the native reserves had to have a pass issued by the proper authority. But even before this, any Ovambo who went to the south for any other purpose than employment in the mines or on the farms faced the danger of being arrested and punished as "an idle and disorderly person" under the Vagrancy Proclamation of 1920. The other important aspect of the southern trade, the importing of livestock to Ovamboland, was made subject to permit in 1919, the transportation of cattle in SWA proper, including Hereroland, having also been dependent on permits from the colonial authorities from 1917 onwards. Thus, on the whole, even though these regulations *per se* did not mean that the Ovambo trade with the Herero ended, their existence gives much reason to believe that it did. Firstly, since one of the main aims of the South African administration in Ovamboland was to encourage Ovambo men to participate in migrant labour, it is probable that the administration tried to enforce the above regulations in order to cut out any means of external income other than working in the mines or on the farms. Secondly, the continuation of trade with the Herero as before would have entailed a serious risk of being arrested and punished by colonial authorities. It is therefore probable that any Ovambo planning a trading journey to the south would have given a second thought and then decided that it was not worth the risk. See Martial Law Regulation 76/1917 (SWA Official Gazette no. 15, 30 Aug. 1917); Prohibited Areas Proclamation 15/1919 section 1(2) (SWA Official Gazette no. 24, 30 Sept. 1919); Vagrancy Proclamation 25/1920 sections 1 and 10 (SWA Official Gazette no. 33, 1 July 1920); Native Administration Proclamation 11/1922 section 5 (SWA Official Gazette no. 82, 1 April 1922).

57 NCO Annual Report 1938, p. 24, 11/1, NAO, NAN.

58 NCO to the Secretary for South West Africa 22 July 1943 and NCO to Chief Native Commissioner 6 Sept. 1943, 10/2, NAO, NAN.

59 Only small livestock species were exchanged locally, while cattle was used in regional trade only in the exceptional case of the purchase of rain from the Evale community (see Siiskonen, 1990, p. 69, 73).

60 Tönjes, 1911, p. 84; Koivu, 1925, p. 146.

61 The sale of cattle for grain during the famine of the early 1930s is mentioned by the missionary Suikkanen and by Native Commissioner Hahn (see O. Suikkanen to M. Tarkkanen 26 April 1929, Eac29, AFMS, NAF; NCO Annual Report 1932, p. 12, 11/1, NAO, NAN). Rautanen reported during the 1908–1909 famine that people were willing to sell livestock in order to buy grain, but he did not specify whether it was small or large livestock. On the other hand, during the 1915–1916 famine Koivu made a particular note that some rich people in Uukwambi were also dying of hunger even though they had cattle still alive. This might indicate that some people were reluctant to sell their cattle, and thus diminish their socially important wealth, even during a time of extreme need (see M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1908 [Olukonda], mmm 20 Jan. 1909, Appendix 1, Hha5 & K. Koivu's Annual Report 1915 [Elim], mmm 22 March 1916, Appendix 16, Hha7, AFMS, NAF.).

meat became a normal practise after the Second World War at the latest.[62]

Thus it is obvious that the role of cattle in Ovambo society changed from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, losing some of their earlier importance as an indicator of social status and becoming more of a commodity. There are probably various reasons for this change, but they lie outside the theme of this work. A couple of potential explanations may be referred to, though. One could have been the trade with Europeans in the latter half of the nineteenth century, as part which the Ovambo sold cattle to them in order to obtain goods which were highly regarded socially[63]. This diminished the social value of cattle in proportion to other, new commodities. Another reason may have been the lack of adequate pasture in South West African Ovamboland from around the late 1920's on.[64] This may have made the option of selling "excess" cattle more tempting.

The social and political system

Kin and family

The two foundations of the pre-colonial Ovambo social system were clans-based kinship and the family. The Ovambo had some twenty to thirty clans[65], named after their founding ancestors. Membership of a clan was determined matrilineally, i.e. children became members of their mother's clan but not that of their father. This system makes the Ovambo the southern-most people of the so called Central African "matrilineal belt"[66].

The role of the matriclans was most evident in the inheritance of personal property such as cattle and grain. When a married man died, this was not inherited by his wife, nor his children, who were not his relatives, but was divided among his closest kin in his matriclan. The strongest claimants would be his eldest living brothers and the sons of his eldest sister.[67] Such a clan-based system of inheritance could in some cases lead to situations in which the economic security of a widow and her children was seriously threatened after her husband's death. Things were made worse by the idea that all the gifts which the husband ever had presented to his wife still belonged *de jure* to his effects and thus could be claimed by his rela-

62 Bruwer, 1961, p. 77; Loeb, 1962, p. 143–144; Banghart, 1969, p. 96–97.

63 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 239. For more on trade with Europeans, see chapter "Violence in...".

64 Kreike, 1996, p. 305 ff, particularly p. 305, 338–343, 352–355, 359.

65 Nobody seems to know the exact number of Ovambo clans. According to the missionary literature, the number must have been something between 11 and 31, while Abed Kandongo from Uukwambi gave the missionary Liljeblad the names of 19 clans in the early 1930s. Frieda Williams, having compiled information from various sources, came to the conclusion that the number of clans was 28 (see ELC no. 786, p. 1193–1194; Tuupainen, 1970, Appendix 6, p. 140–141; Williams, 1988, Appendix III).

66 Tuupainen, 1970, p. 29 and Appendix 1, p. 135. On matrilineality in Central Africa, see Richards, 1987, p. 207–251.

67 E.g. Hahn, C.H.L, Ukuanyama Succession [typed manuscript], s.d., p. 23–25. 2/38, A450, NAN; Delius, 1984, p. 149–150, 154–155, 160–161; Becker & Hinz, 1995, p. 64–66.

tives.[68] The shortcomings of the system were realised by the people themselves, who, by the beginning of the twentieth century, had developed a practise for partially circumventing these. If a man wanted to leave some of his property, particularly cattle, to either his wife or his children, he could sell it to them for a nominal price. After he had informed his maternal kin of the transaction, they could no longer claim that particular part of the husband's property after his death.[69] When a woman died, her property was inherited by either her children, her mother, or other more distant matrilineal relatives.[70] On the whole, the redistribution of wealth through matrilineal inheritance is still the dominant pattern today.[71]

The matriclans were also something that might be called units of common legal responsibility and action. Native Commissioner C. H. L. Hahn claimed that in civil cases it was the clans, and not individuals, who were plaintiffs. Court orders, which nominally were against individuals, were in reality against the whole clan, as the clan was liable for all the actions of its individual members.[72] The means of dealing with murder is highly illustrative in this respect; Murder was normally compensated for with a certain number of cattle forfeited to the matrilineal relatives of the victim, and the murderer's clan was liable to pay this if he himself was unable to do so. If no compensation was paid, the relatives of the deceased had the right to exact blood vengeance, which could be directed against a close relative of the murderer, at least in cases where the murderer himself was not available for punishment.[73] Vengeance was not allowed, however, if the murderer's clan had cleansed the guilt by performing a certain sacrificial rite, or if the king had pardoned the murderer.[74]

68 E.g. Delius, 1984, p. 150; McKittrick, 1995, p. 132, 238.

69 Beantwortung des fragebogens... Ovambogebiet von M. Rautanen & Ovambogebiet Stamm der Ovakuanjama von A. Wulfhorst, 1913, p. 1, Frage no. 2 and p. 21, Frage no. 2; Krafft, 1914, p. 18; Becker, 1995, p. 108; McKittrick, 1995, p. 59 including note 97. (When discussing possible injustices in the matrilineal system of inheritance, it should be remembered that there is another side to the coin as well. Even though a widow may have been in a difficult situation after her husband's death, she in turn had a right to a share of the property left by a deceased close member of her matriclan.)

70 Delius, 1984, p. 151–152.

71 E.g. Hayes, 1992, p. 11; Becker & Hinz, 1995, p. 34; McKittrick, 1995, p. 228, 262; Silvester & Wallace & Hayes, 1998, p. 30 note 116.

72 Hahn, C.H.L, Epata [typed manuscript], s.d., p. 14, 2/38, A450, NAN.

73 Beantwortung des fragebogens... Ovambogebiet von M. Rautanen & Ovambogebiet Stamm der Ovakuanjama von A. Wulfhorst, 1913, p. 11–12, Fragen 59–62 and p. 34, Fragen 58–61;Tönjes, 1911, p. 126–127; Loeb, 1962, p. 72–73.

74 According to Konsa Niilungu, who was one of Liljeblad's informants, members of the clan of any wrongdoer could release themselves from responsibility if they slaughtered an ox and all the members of the kin in turn "stepped into its stomach". He also explained how kings could pardon murderers (the same custom as described by the missionary Sckär): the murderer (or his father or maternal uncle) would take an ox to the king, and the guilt of murder would be washed away if the king accepted the beast and sacrificed it. After that neither the murderer nor his kin could be punished. But if the king refused to perform the sacrifice, the murderer and his kin remained responsible for the murder (see Sckär, Ovamboland, s.d. p. 32–33, AVEM; ELC no. 172 and 173, p. 411). Both these practices, and the use of payment as compensation for murder, are obviously ways of avoiding the excessive use of violence which might have resulted if the principle of common responsibility on the part of the kin had been followed rigorously.

The other main social unit, the family, consisted of a husband, his wife/wives and children. Before marriage could take place, two prerequisites had to be met: firstly the spouses-to-be had to be members of different clans,[75] and secondly the girl had to have participated in the initiation rite which is known in Oshindonga as *ohango* and in Oshikwanyama as *efundula*. This ohango/efundula rite will be discussed more thoroughly later. For the time being it is enough to know that it was a group rite which was usually organized every second or third year and participated in by a large number of girls, normally soon after they had reached puberty, although some participants could be in their late twenties. There were some differences in the actual rite between communities, but it was always led by two specially chosen initiation masters (*Namunganga* – one man and one woman), took place in a specially built homestead, and lasted altogether for several weeks. Ohango began with various tests to ascertain that none of the participating girls was pregnant. After that the rite continued with dances, feasts and tests of endurance. Furthermore, the girls received moral and practical teaching concerning the role and duties of a woman and a wife. Magic also appears to have played a role in ohango, in the form of practices carried out to increase the girls' fertility. At the end of the rite the girls received their adult woman's hair-dress, which marked their transition to social adulthood.[76]

Ohango was the most important rite in an Ovambo girl's life. It legalized sexual relations with her and also gave her future children a legitimate status in society.[77] Its importance is illustrated by the fate of those girls who became pregnant before undergoing initiation. In older times, at least in some communities, both the girl and the boy who made her pregnant were apparently killed, because pre-initiation pregnancy was not only considered a serious social disgrace, but it was also believed to jeopardize the well-being of the whole clan.[78] Later the punishment became more lenient, but the social stigma and fears remained. Around the turn of the twentieth century girls were expelled from their community (for an abortion) and boys were heavily fined. It also appears that in some cases the child was allowed to be born but was killed after that.[79]

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75 The principle of clan exogamy was still being followed strictly in the 1960s, even though the clans had otherwise lost much of their earlier social importance (see Loeb, 1962, p. 99 and Tuupainen, 1970, p. 27).

76 For description of ohango see Sckär, Ovamboland, s.d. p. 49–52, AVEM; Tönjes, 1911, p. 135–144; Hahn, 1928, p. 28–31; Teinonen, 1949, p. 25–28; Bruwer, 1961, p. 114–120; Loeb, 1962, p. 243–249; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 45–50; Estermann, 1976, p. 69–73; Louw, 1977, p.124–127; Juntunen, 2002, p. 15–20.

77 Tuupainen, 1970, p. 51.

78 E.g. Sckär, Ovamboland, s.d. p. 52, AVEM; Wäänänen, Nestori, The customs of Ovambos [manuscript], 1926, p. 2, 2/35, A450, NAN; ELC no. 418, p. 849 & no. 453, p. 915 & no. 1326, p. 1844–1845; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 41; McKittrick, 1995, p. 54; McKittrick, 2002, p. 40.

79 Hahn, C.H.L, Ukuanyama sexual offences [manuscript], s.d., p. 42 and Abortion in Ovamboland [manuscript], s.d., p. 5. Both in 2/38, A450, NAN; ELC no. 71, p. 176 & no. 183, p. 414–415 & no. 368, p. 781 & no. 418, p. 849 & no. 810, p. 1222–1223 & no. 956, p. 1382; Tönjes, 1911, p. 129–130; McKittrick, 1995, p. 54–55, 175. ** It is not known when or why punishments for pre-ohango pregnancies were mitigated, but it was probably not caused, at least not primarily, by any "civilizing influence of the missionaries". The process of mitigating the punishment seems to have started too early for that. McKittrick assumes that the slackening of penalties coincided with the end of male

The marriage could take place after the girl had participated in ohango/efundula, and if she had been betrothed before her initiation, the marriage could take place immediately. Some girls were betrothed by their parents as children, but it is worth noting that the girl had a right to refuse her parents' choice and break off the engagement when she came of age[80]. Usually, at least when two young people were marrying for the first time, they themselves looked for a mate. When a young man had found a suitable young woman, he asked her to become "his girl". If the woman in question answered in the affirmative the man still had to seek for her parents' consent. If they, too, accepted him, the engagement was confirmed with gifts which the man gave to his chosen one.[81]

The time elapsing between engagement and marriage depended on various things. Sometimes it could be several years.[82] When the groom was ready for the wedding, he would send the bride's parents a wedding ox (*oyonda* or *ongombe yohango*). This gift consisted of one animal and four to six hoes.[83] When the

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circumcision, which was in decline before the arrival of the Europeans. This may well be true, because Rautanen reports that the killings ended in Ondonga sometimes around 1860. On the other hand, Sckär states that killings were still taking place when the first missionaries came to Ondonga in 1870, while Liljeblad claims, apparently by hearsay, that there would still have been one case of killing of a pregnant girl as late as 1901. Concerning Uukwanyama, Loeb has a piece of information stating that abortion and infanticide were ended by King Mandume (1911–1917), who replaced these practices with fines and compulsory marriage. If true, this would indicate that the killing of girls, if ever practised in Uukwanyama, had been ended well before that, and Mandume was mitigating punishments that had already been mitigated. There is neverthelss some recent oral information which seems to conflict with our thus far clear-cut interpretation that pre-ohango pregnancies had not been punished with death since the mid-nineteenth century. Some of Heike Becker's informants claim that this severe punishment was first abandoned in Uukwambi under strong missionary influence after the dethronement of King Iipumbu in 1932. Personally, I strongly suspect the reliability of this information, because Onni Aho, the resident Finnish missionary in Uukwambi, wrote in 1931 that pre-initiation pregnancy there was punished by expatriating the girl and imposing a fine on the boy. (See Sckär, Ovamboland, s.d. p. 52, AVEM; O. Aho to the board of directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF; ELC no. 1326, p. 1845; Beantwortung des fragebogens ... Ovambogebiet von M. Rautanen, Frage 35, p. 7; Loeb, 1962, p. 240; McKittrick, 1995, p. 54; Becker, 1996, p. 12, 14.) ** Meredith McKittrick has recently tentatively questioned whether uninitiated girls were ever really killed in Ovamboland: "The stories of pregnant girls being burned alive have all the characteristics of myth, not least because for the past century, the time when this is said to have happened has consistently been placed just beyond the experience of living generations; no one has ever been recorded claiming to witness such a killing." (McKittrick, 2002, p. 40) The contradiction between the oral and written evidence from Uukwambi seems to support her idea. However, I would not be ready to claim that the killing of girls had not existed some time in the distant past. To my mind, the proliferation of independent narratives about the practice suggests that it had existed, while the lack of eyewitness accounts may suggest that it had been abolished well before any narratives were ever recorded by outsiders.

80 Loeb, 1962, p. 241–242; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 53, 54. The Rhenish missionary Brincker, who worked in Uukwanyama in the late 19th century, was of different opinion. According to him, a girl had to marry the man which her parents had chosen for her. Loeb similarly mentions that it was an everyday occurrence for Kwanyma parents to try to force a daughter into marriage with an old, rich man. (See Brincker, 1900, p. 51.)

81 On wooing and engagement, see Tönjes, 1911, p. 133–134; Krafft, 1914, p. 22; Hahn, 1928, p. 32; Loeb, 1962, p. 240–242; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 53–56; Becker & Hinz, 1995, p. 58.

82 Tuupainen, 1970, p. 56.

83 This wedding ox as an object of conflict between the Ovambo and the missionaries will be discussed in detail in chapter "Quarrel over the wedding ox".

bride's parents had accepted this, a wedding feast was organized. One important part of this was the slaughtering of the wedding ox, the blood of which was used in a magic ceremony to increase the bride's fertility, while its meat was distributed to the bride's relatives and friends according to strict rules. After wedding the new couple usually started their married life in the homestead of groom's father until they obtained a plot of land of their own.[84]

Matrilineality had some effects on the family as a social unit, both with respect to the husband's relationship with his wife and his authority as a father over his children. The Ovambo did not take their matrilineality to extremes. In some matrilineal communities the family nucleus consists not of a husband and wife but of a brother and sister, i.e. a married woman and her children do not live with her husband but with her brother.[85] This was not the Ovambo custom, however, because the children's place of residence was patrilocal. The authority of the father over his children is often very limited in communities with brother–sister families; he is respected as *genitor* (procreator) but he has little or no role as *pater* (social father).[86]

As late as 1955 the missionary Erkki Hynönen described the status of an Ovambo wife as being similar to that of a slave.[87] Although women were in many respects subordinate to men, this claim represents a gross diabolization of the Ovambo. Rather, their relationship with their husbands (omitting ties of affection) was a combination of subordination and independence. As long as a wife lived with her husband she had to be obedient to him as the head of the household, till his portion of the fields, cook his meals, fulfil his sexual needs (though in this respect the obligation was reciprocal) and yield to occasional disciplinary beatings.[88] But since she was still a member of her own kin, and important to her husband as an agriculturist, she did not have to put up with everything. If the marriage became unbearable, she could leave him, either temporarily in order to press him to change his behaviour, or permanently by divorcing him. In such cases she either returned to her parents or went to live with some other close maternal relative, who normally had no right to refuse her a refuge in such circumstances.[89]

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84 On weddings and the wedding ox, see e.g. Krafft, 1914, p. 23; Hahn, 1928, p. 32; Närhi, 1929, p. 38–42; Loeb, 1962, p. 252–257; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 56–58.

85 Richards, 1987, p. 209; Parkin, 1997, p. 23, 30–31.

86 Tuupainen, 1970, p. 60, 77; Radcliffe-Brown, 1987, p. 75–77; Richards, 1987, p. 208. On different versions of parental authority among Central African matrilineal societies, see Richards, 1987, p. 217–218, 226–227, 234–235, 239.

87 Hynönen, Erkki, Pakanuuden ja kristillisyyden välinen taistelu avioliitosta Ambomaalla [The battle of paganism and Christianity for marriage in Ovamboland]. In Tuure Vapaavuori, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani Afrikan työaloillemme ja Israeliin 20 kesäkuuta – 20 joulukuuta 1954 [Report of my tour of inspection to our mission fields in Africa and Israel, 20 June to 20 December 1954], Appendix 19, p. 163. Dga, AELCIN.

88 Beantwortung des fragebogens... Ovambogebiet von M. Rautanen, 1913, Frage no. 3, p. 1; Savola, 1924, p. 109; Bruwer, 1961, p. 61; Loeb, 1962, p. 133–134, 137; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 77; Williams, 1988, p. 43–44.

89 Beantwortung des fragebogens... Ovambogebiet von M. Rautanen, 1913, Fragen 8 & 25, p. 2–3, 4–5 & Ovambogebiet (Stamm der Ovakuanjama) von A. Wulfhorst, Frage 25, p. 27; Savola, 1924, p. 77–78, 82; Loeb, 1962, p. 134, 137, 257–258; Estermann, 1976, p. 79; McKittrick, 1995, p. 133; Juntunen, 2002, p. 49. Divorce will be discussed in more detail in chapter "Christianization and the quasi...".

The position of royal women in marriage was obviously much stronger than that of their commoner counterparts. A woman of a royal clan could marry any non-royal man she wanted, even a man who was already married. The man's consent was not needed, and when being married to a royal woman, he was not allowed to have any other wives. His position as a partner was subordinate, and the wife was the head of the household.[90]

An Ovambo father's relation to his children was described in the following way by the missionary Onni Aho during the famine of the early 1930s:

> "It is characteristic of this famine that there is a fight for every piece of porridge and it is the strongest who eats. The children are the first to be abandoned and then the wife must go. The last to remain is the man, who eats the little that is left."[91]

The main message of Aho's apparently rather exaggerated description seems to be that the affectional bonds between fathers and their children were weak. Some other missionaries, Tuure Vapaavuori in particular, sometimes lamented that the fathers' power over their children was so weak that it hampered a good, Christian upbringing.[92] Thus, the Finnish missionaries seem to emphasize the *genitor* role of the Ovambo father. So does Frieda Williams, but she notes that the upbringing of children was the duty of both parents.[93]

Williams' view is obviously closer to the truth than that of the missionaries[94]. An Ovambo father was not simply a *genitor*, but he also had other roles. This closer-than-genitor relationship is reflected in the Ovambo name system, for example, where the custom was that a child was given a first name and also used a patronymic. Furthermore, it was the father who decided on the child's first name.[95]

A father also had other rights and obligations towards his children apart from name giving, although not unlimited ones. He had a right to use his children as labour for cultivating his portion of the fields or herding his cattle. He also taught

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90 ELC no. 275, p. 647–651; Schinz, 1891, p. 304; Tönjes, 1911, p. 119; Beantwortung des Fragebogens...Ovambogebiet von M. Rautanen, 1913, Frage 93, p. 16; Lehman, 1954/55, p. 298; Loeb, 1962, p. 59.

91 O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 23 Jan. 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF. (Transl. KM)

92 Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan ja Okavangon lähetysalueilla pidetyistä tarkastuksista 1946 [Minutes of the inspections held in the mission fields of Ovamboland and Okavango in 1946] (Elim parish inspection 22 June 1946), p. 26, Daa, AELCIN; Hynönen, Erkki, Pakanuuden ja kristillisyyden välinen taistelu avioliitosta Ambomaalla... In Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani... 1954, p. 163, Dga, AELCIN; T. Vapaavuori to M. Tarkkanen 23 Jan. 1933, Eac31, AFMS, NAF; Copy T. Vapaavuori to K. Himanen 9 Dec. 1947 Eac42, AFMS, NAF; Savola, 1924, p. 76–77.

93 Williams, 1988, p. 52. See also Estermann, 1976, p. 104.

94 Savola's book is a good example of how missionaries sometimes became inconsistent when they wanted to emphasize aspects of Ovambo culture which they looked on as negative. First Savola writes that only the mother took care of the children's upbringing and that the husband did not care about them at all. Yet a little later he describes how boys from an early age followed their father in his work and in that way learned men's duties (see Savola, 1924, p. 77, 110–111).

95 Saarelma–Maunumaa, 1997, p. 56–58, 62–64.

his sons the duties and tasks of men, while similar teaching was given to the girls by their mother.[96] When bringing up his children he had a right to discipline them, but not excessively. If he caused a child bodily injury by beating, or killed a child of his, he was liable to pay compensation to his wife's kin, just like any other criminal.[97] But this liability also worked the other way round. If a son herding his father's livestock caused the death of an animal, for example, the father could claim compensation from his wife's relatives.[98] This was in accordance with the Ovambo concept of legal responsibility referred to earlier, which in a father-child relationship meant that the father had no legal responsibility for his child's misdoings, but that this responsibility rested entirely with the child's maternal relatives.[99]

An Ovambo father not only participated in the upbringing of his children, but he also had a role in certain crises. One Ondonga custom illustrates this aspect of fatherhood; When an infant fell seriously ill his father had to sacrifice a dog. If he refused to do this, it gave his wife a legitimate reason to leave him. If the dog sacrifice did not cure the child, the father had to go to a healer who checked his penis and anus in order to find out whether they had certain minor malformations ("pimples"), as these were believed to be a potential cause of the child's illness, and if such pimples were found, they were excised. A father's refusal to go to a healer was seen as an attempt to kill the child. If the infant was still sick after the excision, the father had to sacrifice an ox.[100]

To end our list of paternal rights and duties, a brief reference should be made to the father's role in certain rites of passage. As mentioned above, the father's approval for his daughter's suitor was needed. In Uukwanyama, at least up to the end of the nineteenth century, a father could also control the timing of his son's marriage, because "no Kwanyama boy started to seek for a wife before his father gave him permission to do so"[101] . There was also another custom, known as *omutenge* (burden), by which a father could control his sons' marriages. A man could not be considered fit for marriage before he owned at least one head of livestock, which he could receive from his father in exchange for working for him. Later, when contract labour became an essential part of the Ovambo economy, young men could perform *omutenge* by giving their wage earnings to their fathers.[102] Finally, in connection with *ohango/efundula* a father also had a minor magico-ritualistic role. It was his duty to grease his daughter as she was leaving for the *ohango*, as this was believed to ensure her many children and material well-being.[103] An honourable

96 E.g. Savola, 1924, p. 110–111; Hahn 1928, p. 27, 28.
97 Sckär, Ovamboland, s.d. p. 59–60, AVEM; Savola, 1924, p. 76. One exception was that there was no liability if the death was believed to have been caused by a father cursing his vicious and unrepentant son in a certain manner (See Estermann, 1976, p. 62).
98 Savola, 1924, p. 76.
99 Cf. Delius, 1984, p. 136.
100 ELC no. 15, p. 56 and no. 1324, p. 1836–1838.
101 ELC no. 488, p. 975.
102 McKittrick, 1995, p. 56-57; McKittrick, 2002, p. 177–180.
103 ELC no. 147, p. 362 & no. 458, p. 920 & no. 930, p. 1354 & no. 970, p.1399 & no. 985, p. 1420 & no. 1164a, p. 1638.

father was also expected to slaughter an ox, or at least a goat, for her daughter's *ohango* feast.[104]

A social father under a rigorous regime of matrilineality, i.e. a maternal uncle, was not without importance in the life of the individual among the Ovambo. He was a highly respected person, but his role was activated only when something unusual happened.[105] The special respect for a maternal uncle is seen, for example, in the fact that while the father was called *tate*, a maternal uncle was called either *tatekulu* or *kuku*, terms indicating that the person addressed is more senior and more respected than mere *tate*.[106] A person's maternal uncle was regarded as his or her "best friend", and a boy was expected to take constant small gifts to his *tatekulu*.[107]

The uncle's role was activated if there was a major conflict between the father and his son or daughter, for example. If things went really badly, a person could leave his or her father's homestead and move to live with this uncle, because he was regarded as the protector of his nephews and nieces and was thus obliged to give them shelter in time of need[108] . Shelter was also given when the children's mother died, for in such a case the children did not normally remain with their father but the guardianship passed to maternal relatives.[109] An uncle apparently also had a right to be involved in cases when his nephew committed serious wrongdoings and was expected to punish him, even to kill him if necessary.[110] This was something a father was not allowed to do.

One could summarize the Ovambo social system by saying that the it was based on a matrilineal concept of kinship but it had fairly strong element of patriarchy. The matrilineal kin were usually somewhat in the background and were activated in cases when the rights of the kin as a whole, or those of a member of the kin, were somehow threatened. But in everyday life patriarchal influence was fairly strong, both in the relationship between a husband and wife and in that between a father and his children, although far from unlimited.

104 ELC no. 68, p. 167 & no. 147, p. 363 & no. 321, p. 751 & no. 799, p. 1213 & no. 930, p. 1356 & no. 1164a, p. 1639.

105 Cf. Estermann, 1976, p. 89, 104 & McKittrick, 1995, p. 60 & Becker and Hinz, 1995, p. 74.

106 Loeb, 1962, p. 104; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 34; Estermann, 1976, p. 88.

107 Loeb, 1962, p. 106.

108 Ibid. Moving to an uncle's homestead was not always a right but sometimes also an obligation. If the uncle did not have any sons old enough to herd his cattle, he usually took a nephew or two on for this work (see Estermann, 1976, p. 83).

109 Hahn, C.H.L, Ovambo law of person [manuscript], s.d., p. 11, 2/38, A450, NAN. ** Either this rule was not without exceptions, or things in this respect were changing in the early twentieth century. King Kambonde kaNamene wrote to Native Commissioner Eedes in 1953 about his niece, whose mother had died in 1932. Since then the girl had been in the custody of both her father and her maternal uncle, i.e. the king (see Chief Kambonde to NCO 21 March 1953, 51/2, NAO, NAN).

King and country

At the end of the nineteenth century all the Ovambo communities in present-day Namibia with the exception of Ombalantu were ruled over by persons called in Oshindonga *omukwaniilwa*, a term which is usually translated into English as "king". Ovambo kingship was not a monolithic phenomenon, since a king's power differed somewhat between communities[111] and there were also temporal changes.

It is not known for sure when kingship as a centralized political force came into existence in Ovamboland. Royal genealogies reach back far into history,[112] but both Salokoski and McKittrick claim that a consolidated Ovambo kingship is a rather recent phenomenon. According to their findings, the centralization of power into the kings' hands took place sometimes in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, as a consequence of a slow evolution during which a considerable proportion of both the practical and ritualistic duties and rights were passed from the lineage heads to the kings.[113] This centralization of power was probably caused by the ecological conditions in the country in general, and in particular by the scarcity of surface water. Communities tried to utilize floodwater effectively by building reservoirs, but such large-scale building operations would have been impossible without centralized leadership.[114] The tendency to transfer power from the lineage heads to the kings may have been intensified in the middle of the nineteenth century because of the emergence of long-distance trade with the Europeans and the needs connected with this.[115]

The idea that the centralization of power in the kings' hands took place around the beginning of the nineteenth century is supported by information showing that there seem to have been several kings around that time who were said to have consolidated their power.[116] McKittrick has argued that subjects' opposition to the powers which the kings appropriated for themselves in the late nineteenth century would show that these powers were not seen as legitimate, and therefore they must

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110 McKittrick has a piece of information about a young man who had committed many crimes and was executed by his maternal uncle in the late 1920s or early 1930s, apparently without any public outcry (see McKittrick, 1995, p. 199, note 43).

111 Combining Hayes' and McKittrick's views, it can be assumed that the eastern communities may have had more powerful kings than the western ones in the late nineteenth century, and that in the east the Uukwambi kings had more power than their colleagues in Ondonga or Uukwanyama (see Hayes, 1992, p. 119 and McKittrick, 1995, p. 46 note 58, p. 48, 65–66, 67–68).

112 Williams, 1991, Appendix VI, p. 189–193.

113 Salokoski, 1992, p. 80–85; McKittrick, 1995, p. 28–29, 46, 48–49.

114 Clarence-Smith & Moorsom, 1975, p. 369; Clarence-Smith, 1979, p. 75; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 45; Hayes, 1992, p. 47.

115 According to Hayes (1992, p. 52), there was a connection between the abolition of male circumcision (early or middle 19th century) and the increase in the kings' power. Circumcision was controlled by the lineage elders, and therefore its ending reduced their influence over the young men. This then gave the kings a chance to organize the same young men into the military bands which were necessary in order to obtain goods (by raiding) which the kings needed to pay for the goods bought from European traders. Salokoski basically agrees with Hayes' view, even though she argues that it is not entirely grounded in concrete evidence (see Salokoski, 1998, p. 5–6).

116 Williams, 1991, p. 117–118, 122, 126.

have been of rather recent origin.[117] Her argument is fairly logical, but the problem, as she herself notes, is that so very little is known about kingship in the eighteenth century, for instance. Therefore it is possible that the evolution which appears to be a consolidation of power was actually a reconsolidation. It may be that the kings simply regained at the beginning of the nineteenth century prerogatives which had earlier belonged to them but had been lost at some point. It is quite possible that the kings' powers had had similar ups and downs before the early nineteenth century as they had during the latter half of it, although the instability of royal power at the end of the century was partly caused by the emergence of trade with Europeans and phenomena connected with this[118] , which naturally did not exist during the previous century.

Royal powers indeed had their ups and downs during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The Uukwambi kings, for example, were obviously weak around the middle of the century, because Uukwambi was pillaged by Ngandjera until King Tshikongo finally was able to defeat them.[119] Royal power and prestige was again on the decline during the reign of King Nuyoma (1863–1875), because he organized internal raids in the community in order to gain cattle. This led many Kwambi to flee, and the trust in the king was restored only by Nuyoma's more moderate successor Negumbo (1875–1907).[120] In Uukwanyama, during the reigns of the kings Ueyulu yaHedimbi (1884–1904) and Nande Hamalwa (1904–1911), many of their rights and powers were seized by the headmen, who appear to have become de facto independent local rulers in some cases. Royal prerogatives were restored again, at least to some extent, by Mandume yaNdemufayo (1911–1917).[121] In Ondoga, too, the power of the legitimate king was seriously curtailed between 1886 and 1908, when the country was divided into two parts, western Ondonga being ruled by king Kambonde kaMpingana, while his younger brother, Nehale Amunyela, was de facto ruler of the eastern part. Unification of Ondonga was achieved only after Nehale's death.[122]

Having said this much about the evolution of kingship in Ovamboland, it is now time to try to create a generalization of the role of the kings in Ovambo society. I am not going to contribute to the discussion on whether Ovambo kings were divine or just sacred. It is enough to say that arguments have been expressed on both sides.[123] Instead, the rest of this sub-chapter will simply try to describe the most

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117 McKittrick, 1995, p. 45. See also p. 49–51.

118 See chapter "Violence in...".

119 Williams, p. 127–128.

120 Ibid. p. 159–160.

121 ELC no. 1170, p. 1657 and no. 1176, p. 1664; Lehmann, 1954/55, p. 286–287, 288–289, 290–291; Hayes, 1992, p. 95–97, 161–166; Silvester, 1995, p. 6–8. See also *"Healing the Land"*, 1997, p. 73–76.

122 Williams, 1991, p. 145–146; Eirola, 1992, p. 57–62, 225–226.

123 Just to categorize the interpretations of some scholars: Aarni (1982, p. 84–84), Borkowsky (1975, p. 88–92), Lehman (1954/55, particularly p. 300–301) and Williams (1991, p. 99) define Ovambo kings as sacred, while Loeb (1962, p. 41), Salokoski (1992, particularly p. 386–388) and Siiskonen (1990, p. 41) see them as divine. Salokoski, who has made the most thorough analysis of the matter, comes to the conclusion that the Ovambo themselves regarded their kings as sacred, but that in fact they were divine in all essential aspects of the term.

important rights and duties of the Ovambo kings, and the limits on their power, such as they would have been approximately in the nineteenth century in cases where the kings were in the possession of all those rights which could be vested upon them.

The succession to kingship followed the principles of matrilineality. Thus the legal heir to the throne was the eldest living brother of the deceased king or, if there were no brothers, the eldest son of king's eldest sister.[124] The strict line of succession was not always followed, however. If the king had a younger brother he usually had no difficulties in securing the kingship, but if there were several nephews, the right of the first heir to the throne did not always go unchallenged. Succession disputes and conflicts did occur, and the winner was not necessarily the eldest nephew, but the one with the strongest political or military support.[125] Such struggles for power were not always restricted to the time after the old king's death, but sometimes took place during his last years, as happened in Ondonga in 1905–1907, when the increasing independence of the probable first heir to the throne, Kambonde y'Iitope, created tensions between him and the King Kambonde kaMpingana. The situation continued to escalate until the combined forces of the king, his younger brother Nehale and his youngest sister Mutaleni defeated Kambonde y'Iitope's supporters in a brief battle in February 1907. After this the heir and his younger brother, Martin, were expelled from Ondonga.[126] This opened the road to the throne for Mutaleni's son Kambonde kaNgula in 1909, and several Finnish missionaries were convinced that the whole conflict between Kambonde the king and Kambonde the heir was a carefully planned plot by Mutaleni, who wanted to secure the kingship for her son.[127]

It is quite interesting that missionary accounts stress the unorganized and potentially violent elements in the succession to the throne, while some Ovambo accounts give a rather different picture, suggesting that it may actually have been a rational, elective process. There are some narratives in Liljeblad's collection (from Ondonga, Uukwanyama and Ongandjera) which differ in detail but basically describe a similar process of succession: Thus, when it became obvious that the old king was to die soon, his closest advisers and community elders, possibly with the king's principal wife or some high-ranking woman of the royal clan, assembled for a meeting to negotiate over which of the persons who had the right to the throne should become king. The most desirable candidate would have been a man who was young, wise, firm and peace-loving. When a decision had been reached, the assembly sent a message to the king elect and asked him to seize power.[128]

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124 E.g. Tönjes, 1911, p. 118; Hahn, 1928, p. 8.

125 E.g. Rautanen, 1903, p. 338; Tönjes, 1911, p. 119; Beantwortung des fragebogens... Ovambogebiet von M. Rautanen, 1913, Frage 92, p. 16; Savola, 1916, p. 85.

126 Peltola, 1958, p. 111, 141; Eirola, 1992, p. 158–163, 211–213.

127 A. Hänninen to J. Mustakallio 3 Nov. 1905 & E. Liljeblad to J. Mustakallio 2 Oct. 1905 & A. Pettinen to J. Mustakallio 26 Aug. 1905, Eac11, AFMS, NAF; A. Pettinen to J. Mustakallio 30 Nov. 1906 and 27 Feb. 1907, Eac12, AFMS, NAF; Kalle Koivu: Ambomaalla vuodesta 1904 [In Ovamboland since 1904], p. 32, HpXIII:1, AFMS, NAF.

128 ELC no. 84, p. 214 & no. 278, p. 660–662 & no. 658, p. 1105 & no. 1100, p. 1537–1538. Cf. Hahn, 1928, p. 14. ** The contradiction between the images "king by election" and "king by force" may

The king lived in his royal court, which was actually a homestead just like any other, except much larger. Apart from the king's wives and children, there were also courtiers and servants living there. The general management of the royal household was in the hands of a "butler" or "chief guardian", while king's principal wife was responsible for supervising the female servants. The king was also served by a cook, messengers, attendants and bodyguards. Furthermore, he had one or two circumcised old men in the court. These were the custodians of the holy fire, whose duty it was to make sure that the fire of the kingdom was kept burning constantly during the king's lifetime. The inhabitants of the court also included a group of children and young people. Potential candidates for kingship were brought up in the court from early childhood, as also were certain promising young men whom the king wanted to be trained for administrative or military duties.[129] All in all, the royal court was not only a production unit like any other homestead, but also a residence of central power, the site of the holy symbol of the community, and an administrative high school.

The king's main assistant and advisor for the central administration of his domain was his chief minister, *Elenga Ekuluntu*. His power appears to have been secondary only to the king's, and his relationship with the king so close that earlier he was killed when his master died.[130] At the central level of administration the king was also assisted by a council of advisors known as *omalenga* (sing. *elenga*). Their positions were not hereditary but they were appointed and discharged by the king. A new king could keep some of his predecessor's *omalenga* in his service,[131] but he would also appoint new ones during his reign. Some of these may have been members of the royal clan, but there would also be commoners whom the king had promoted because of their abilities and loyalty, or because they were his favourites or old friends.[132]

The information available on the sharing of power between the king and the *omalenga* is rather ambiguous, and the situation obviously varied depending on the strength of the king's position[133]. When the king was able to exercise all his prerogatives, the role of the *omalenga* appears to have been a purely advisory one, but their advice could naturally have an effect on the king's decisions.[134] When the

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be a result of a temporal difference. It may be that Liljeblad's informants were describing the process of succession as it had been earlier, while the missionaries were depicting it as it was at the time when they wrote about it (i.e. at the end of the 19th century). This hypothesis is quite logical when we know that the use of violence in Ovambo societies obviously became more frequent during the latter half of the 19th century (see the next sub-chapter), and therefore it may also have become a more common method of gaining power. On the other hand, it is possible that there is actually no contradiction between the two views concerning the succession to the throne. Maybe there were normally negotiations and the election of a new king but because the ousted pretenders did not acknowledge the result, the situation often turned into a succession dispute.

129 Hahn, 1928, p.10–12; Williams, 1991, p.107, 112; Salokoski, 1992, p. 161–170.

130 Williams, 1991, p. 106, 112; Salokoski, 1992, p. 174.

131 Sckär, Ovamboland, s.d. p. 22-23, AVEM; Loeb, 1962, p. 51–52, 62; Williams, 1991, p. 106.

132 ELC no. 83, p. 213–214; Tönjes, 1911, p. 111–112; Beantwortung.... von M. Rautanen, 1913, Frage 93, p. 16; Williams, 1991, p. 105–106; Salokoski, 1992, p. 175, 178.

133 Cf. Hayes, 1992, p. 94–97.

134 Hahn, C.H.L, Tribal laws and customs of the Ovambos [typescript], s.d., p. 1, 2/38, A450,NAN; Schinz, 1891, p. 320; Rautanen, 1903, p. 336; Beantwortung..., 1913, von M. Rautanen Frage no. 93, p. 16 & von A. Wulfhorst Frage no. 93, p. 40; Savola, 1916, p. 88–89; Loeb, 1962, p. 28.

king was weak, as in the case of the Uukwanyama kings at the end of the 19th century, for example, the council of *omalenga* could become a decision-making body.[135]

For regional administration purposes the communities were divided into districts (*iikandjo*, sg. *oshikandjo*) and further into wards (*omikunda,* sg. *omukunda*), which consisted of several homesteads.[136] The regional units were administered by headmen who were responsible for maintaining law and order in their areas, for the mobilization of men for raids and war, and for making sure that the king's orders were followed and that people cultivated their fields. They also had to take care of the collection of the royal tributes, such as the workforce for his fields, poles for his homestead and cattle for his kraal. Furthermore, the headmen acted as judges in minor cases.[137] In return for carrying out their duties, they expected their subordinate households to provide them with gifts[138] or labour when needed[139]. The district headmen bought their areas from the king with a few head of cattle. This did not necessarily give them lifelong rights, however, since the king was entitled to evict the headmen at will.[140] Thus being a headman was not just a matter of a transaction but also presupposed the king's favour and trust. The *omalenga* were usually also district headmen, and women, too, were eligible for this status, the king's mother in particular.[141]

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135 Vilho Kaulinge reported that during the reign of King Ueyulu ya Hedimbi (1884–1904) the council made the rules and regulations governing the country. At that time it was also a self-appointing body, i.e. the omalenga decided who was allowed to participate its meetings. On the other hand, Kaulinge also states that the council advised the king and administered the country together with him (see "*Healing the Land*", 1997, p. 41). ** One of Liljeblad's informants, Simon Jona from Uukwanyma, also contributed a rather interesting, though slightly obscure, narrative. He recounted that once a year eight "masters of taboo houses" had a meeting in which they made decisions about raids and passed laws which were then given to the people in the king's name. This council was known as *Ekandjo*. Salokoski has suggested that this may have been a council that existed at the time when the Uukwanyama kingship had not yet been consolidated, i.e. in the 18th century. Unfortunately Simon's story contains nothing that would make it possible to date the practice. Also the concept "masters of taboo houses" remains unclear. It may mean omalenga, but it could also refer to the clan elders. What Simon's story does clearly tell us, however, is that the kings were not always free to make decisions at will (see ELC no. 1001, p. 1439; Salokoski, 1998, p. 14).

136 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 47–48; Williams, 1991, p. 106–107, 112. ** Rautanen (1903, p. 336), Wulfhorst (Beantwortung....,1913, Frage 40, p. 32) and Loeb (1962, p. 42) mention only the omikunda as regional units, but their information must be inaccurate, at least as far as the situation at the beginning of the twentieth century is concerned, for both districts and wards existed at that time. Tönjes (1911, p. 164), for example, writes in his book about Namupala, a noble Kwanyama woman, who had been granted an area (Bezirk) to administrate. She had received this from Nekoto, the aunt of King Nande's (1904–1911). Thus Nekoto must herself have been a district headman and Namupala a ward headman. Vilho Kaulinge's narration (*Healing the Land*, 1997, p. 50) also reveals that there were both district headmen and ward headmen in Uukwanyma during the reign of King Ueyulu (1884–1904).

137 Tönjes, 1911, p. 112–113, 121; Savola, 1916, p. 93–94; Williams, 1991, p. 106–107; Salokoski, 1992, p. 176.

138 Vedder, 1985, p. 72.

139 Beantwortung.... Ovambogebiet, Stamm der Ovakuanjama von A. Wulfhorst, 1913, Frage 88, p. 39.

140 Tönjes, 1911, p. 120; Loeb, 1962, p. 43.

141 Tönjes, 1911, p. 120, 164; Loeb, 1962, p. 42.

The headmen and *omalenga* had their administrative role in Ovambo societies, but they were still subordinates to the kings, sometimes only *de jure* but normally also *de facto*. The king, as the head of the community, had rights, duties and powers in many fields of life, e.g. in the field of jurisdiction, both in lawmaking and in the administration of justice.

The available information about the role of kings as legislators is blurred and contradictory. This is partly due to the fact that different writers appear to give different meanings to the concept of law (or more accurately – of ordinance), which, being of western origin, may not even always be applicable to the orders regulating non-western communities. Kings had a right to give orders which were meant to be observed by everybody. The relevant question now is whether these orders can be considered laws or new laws. For the needs of the present study we can define a "law" as an order which is given by a legitimate authority for everybody under his jurisdiction to obey with the aim of regulating conduct or relationships in matters which have not previously been regulated by any legitimate authority, temporal or celestial. When this definition is used, the role of Ovambo kings as legislators seems originally to have been weak or non-existent. The missionaries Rautanen and Wulfhorst deny the existence of any law-making in Ovambo communities and claim that all their laws were ancient customs.[142] Savola basically agrees with his colleagues when he writes that ancient rules which had become sacred formed a "kind of constitution" for Ondonga that even kings were obliged to follow. But at the same time he also writes that if a king gave orders which were in contradiction to these ancient rules, people still had to obey them.[143] The weakness of the kings' law-making authority is also illustrated by one finding noted by Salokoski: that kings' orders were rules which concerned matters similar to taboos.[144] This would indicate that royal orders were subordinate to the ancient rules and were normally given only in order to interpret these rules in individual cases. One further example about the unchangeable nature of laws can be found in the proclamations which Uukwanyama kings made when they ascended to the throne, laying down the rules according to which peace could be preserved in the country, which included banning such things as killing other people, causing bodily harm, cattle thefts and rape. But these proclamations were not new laws, since they were not created by each new king but were issued in a similar form by all successors to the throne. As Loeb puts it, "Just as the king was divine, so these orders, or laws, were also divine; and because they represented the cosmic order they were not liable to change."[145]

The above examples demonstrate that originally (or at least at some point in history) the Ovambo kings did not have a role as legislators within their respective communities. But at (or by) the beginning of the twentieth century things appear to have changed. Some actions of the Uukwanyama king Mandume Ya Ndemufayo

142 Beantwortung... Ovambogebiet vom M. Rautanen, 1913, Frage 96, p. 16 and Ovambogebiet, Stamm der Ovakuanjama von A. Wulfhorst, 1913, Frage 96, p. 40.

143 Savola, 1916, p. 85, 98.

144 Salokoski, 1992, p. 160.

145 Loeb, 1962, p. 45.

(1911–1917) are good examples in this respect. Shortly after assuming power, Mandume gave two orders. First he banned the picking of unripe fruit, a practice which his predecessor had allowed, and a little later he ordered an end to all unnecessary shooting with firearms, e.g. at weddings and the annual cattle feasts, a practise which also had been prevalent during the reign of earlier kings and had often caused losses of life.[146] Missionaries as well as some academics such as Loeb and Salokoski have tended to see these and some of Mandume's other early orders as new laws.[147] Hayes is of a different opinion, however. Basing her analysis on Vilho Kaulinge's narration, she claims that Mandume's actions were profoundly traditionalist and aimed at reviving the royal power.[148] She is probably partly right. Mandume's first orders appear to have been tests which he made in order to find out how the *elenga* and the headmen would react to his commands, and as such they were the first steps in a process of strengthening the king's position. His main aim was basically traditionalist, to make the king's position a strong one, as it had been before the mid-nineteenth century. But why would he have settled only for reintroducing old royal prerogatives while he could have strengthened his position further by issuing new laws? When banning the picking of unripe fruit, Mandume may have been working within the context of reviving old royal prerogatives, since kings had had certain special rights concerning fruit trees.[149] Furthermore, his orders dealt with controlling the agricultural cycle, which again belonged to kings' rights.[150] But the shooting ban seems to be a different case. Firstly, it is hardly likely that a ban on the unnecessary use of firearms could have been an attempt to reintroduce some ancient but at that time obsolete royal prerogative, since firearms were still a rather recent phenomenon in Ovamboland[151] . Secondly, one reason why Mandume banned shooting was his wish to save ammunition, which might soon be needed in a war against the whites,[152] i.e. the Portuguese, who were advancing in Southern Angola. Thus Mandume's order was given at least partly as a response to the changed political situation, a situation that had not existed in any "ancient times". In this sense his shooting ban clearly constituted new legislation.

It is worth noting that Mandume was not the only Ovambo king who passed new laws at the beginning of the twentieth century. His Ondonga colleague, Kambonde kaNgula, gave an order in 1911 or 1912 that Sunday was to be a day of

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146 E.g. "*Healing the land*", 1997, p. 42–49; Loeb, 1962, p. 71; Hayes, 1993, p. 99–100.

147 Loeb, 1962, p. 33–34; Salokoski, 1992, p. 361; Hayes, 1993, p. 92, 99.

148 Hayes, 1993, p. 92, 99–100, 113.

149 Information concerning the ownership and use of fruit trees is again rather scattered and contradictory. Rautanen claims that the kings' rights over fruit trees were similar to their rights over land, i.e. that subjects had to buy the right to use fruit trees from the king. Wulfhorst, on the other hand, notes that in Uukwanyama fruit trees and their yield within the limits of a homestead belonged to its head. Delius, drawing his information from various sources, agrees with Wulfhorst, with the exception of Marula trees, maintaining that kings had a right to part of the yield of any Marula tree (see Beantwortung.... 1913, von M. Rautanen, Frage 40, p. 8 and von A. Wulfhorst, Frage 40, p. 32; Delius, 1984, p. 129–130).

150 See below.

151 Firearms began pouring into Ovamboland from the 1860s on, when trade with Europeans increased (see e.g. Siiskonen, 1990, p. 238–239).

152 "*Healing the land*", 1997, p. 46.

rest for all.[153] This was done under missionary influence, and his intention was obviously to change old practices. All in all, it is therefore evident that Ovambo kings acted as lawmakers at the beginning of the twentieth century simply because they had to regulate relationships of a new kind and respond to new challenges.

The other judicial function of kings, that of acting as judges, is far more obvious than their role as legislators. They were the supreme judges within their communities (when able to exercise all their prerogatives, that is)[154]. Petty offences were judged by headmen, but the parties had the right to appeal to the king if they were not happy with the headman's decision. It also appears that cases in which the plaintiff and defendant lived in different districts fell under the king's jurisdiction.[155] The king was the first (and only) instance in cases of serious crimes, however, which, according to Estermann, included high treason, voluntary or involuntary homicide, witchcraft (i.e. causing death by sorcery), adultery with a king's wife and conjugal sodomy.[156] The punishments which kings were entitled to impose were execution, confiscation of property, expatriation and fines. Disobedient districts could be punished by raiding them, although this appears to have been more of a political or economic matter than a judicial punishment.[157]

When cases were brought to the royal court they were not always judged by the king alone, or even by the king himself. If he wished, he could deal with cases together with his *omalenga*, or he could yield the presidency to his chief advisor or to an *omutokoli* (judge).[158] The impartiality of such courts has been doubted. Mis-

153 A. Björklund, Selostus Onajenan tilanteesta [Report concerning the situation in Onayena], mmm 17 July 1912 Appendix 1, Hha6, AFMS, NAF.

154 It is said that during the reign of King Ueyulu ya Hedimbi (1884–1904) the Uukwanyama omalenga and headmen assumed wider judicial functions at the expense of the king (see Hayes, 1992, p. 96).

155 E.g. Rautanen, 1903, p. 340; Beantwortung... 1913, von A. Wulfhorst, Frage 70, p. 36; Hahn, 1928, p. 18; Loeb, 1962, p. 33–34, 69–70; Estermann, 1976, p. 124.

156 Estermann, 1976, p. 124. ** It is interesting that Estermann mentions homicide as one of the crimes which fell under the king's jurisdiction. As described earlier, murder was basically a matter between clans, but the king had the right to pardon murderers. Salokoski (1992 p. 363–364) has also pointed out that kings had a reconciliatory influence in murder cases. Although Estermann mentions that this crime was attoned for by the murderer's clan with an indemnity of dozen head of cattle, there still appears to be a minor contradiction between his apparent idea that the king was an active judge in murder cases and some other narratives which describe the king as being more in a secondary or reconciliatory role. It may be that Estermann was describing the situation as it was when he was working in Southern Angola, i.e. from the 1920s onwards. If this is the case, then we may assume, or hypothesize, that murder had originally been purely an issue between clans but that later, in the course of time, the kings assumed a reconciliatory role, so that finally it became a crime which was compensated for in the same way as earlier but only after the king had made a decision concerning this compensation. ** It is worth referring in this context to one piece of information which was told to missionary Emil Liljeblad by Sakarias Hamutenja from Uukwanyama, that if a murderer refused to pay indemnity, the relatives of the victim went to the king, who decided whether they were allowed to kill the murderer or to take his cattle (see ELC no. 498, p. 980). In other words, murder was still in the first instance a case between clans, but if the normal compensation process failed, it was up to the king to decide on what lawful action should be taken.

157 Salokoski, 1992, p. 366–370.

158 E.g. Sckär, Ovamboland, s.d., p. 30–31, AVEM; Tönjes, 1911, p. 113; Beantwortung..., 1913,von M. Rautanen, Frage no. 70, p. 14; Vedder, 1985, p. 72; Salokoski, 1992, p. 183.

sionaries in particular tend to emphasize the arbitrariness of the decisions and the role of bribes in the judicial process. They claim that the kings usually judged in favour of wealthy persons and against those in a weak position, and that punishments could be avoided by giving the king plentiful gifts.[159] It is true that the party which lost the case had to pay high honoraria to the king for his judgement at the court[160], and that both fines and confiscated property went to the king[161]. Such practises obviously enabled kings to abuse their rights as judges, and in the latter half of the nineteenth century some of them fabricated accusations of witchcraft against individuals in order to gain access to cattle and slaves which they needed for trading with European merchants.[162] It would apparently be wrong, however, to claim that all kings used their judicial powers to promote their own well-being or that of the upper stratum of society.[163] The extent to which the trials in a king's court were impartial probably depended on the king's character and the external circumstances prevailing during his reign.

The judicial role of the kings, although important as such, was less important than their role in controlling agricultural production and ensuring the fertility of the land[164]. This is the field in which their use of power and execution of their duties was directly connected with the material well-being of their subjects, or was believed to be essential for this well-being. Therefore, the royal rights and duties connected with production were partly practical and partly ritualistic[165].The most important of the kings' practical rights was that of deciding about the allocation of fields, as described earlier. By controlling the use of land, they were responsible for the most essential resource needed for production, but they also had some control over another means of production, i.e. labour, as they organized corvée labour for public works such as the digging of water reservoirs.[166]

159 E.g. Tönjes, 1911, p. 113; Beantwortung..., 1913 von M. Rautanen, Frage no. 63, p. 12 & von A. Wulfhorst, Frage no. 63, p. 35; Närhi, 1929, p. 93; Loeb, 1962, p. 69.

160 Hahn, 1928, p. 18-19; Estermann, 1976, p. 125.

161 Beantwortung..., 1913 von M. Rautanen, Frage no. 63, p. 12; Salokoski, 1992, p. 366, 369.

162 Möller, 1974 [1899], p. 127; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 216; Salokoski, 1992, p. 372–373; Hayes, 1992, p. 91–92; McKittrick, 1995, p. 65.

163 Not much is known about how individual kings conducted trials, but fair kings evidently existed. Vilho Kaulinge reports that King Mweshipandeka sha Shaninga of Uukwanyama (1862–1882) did not preside over trials personally but supervised the verdicts made by the omalenga. If he thought that the omalenga's decision might endanger the security of the person in question, he would amend the ruling. Similarly we find a mention in Williams' dissertation that King Haimbili yaHaufiku (ca. 1811–1858) wanted justice to be done to everybody and committed suicide after he had found out that some of his omalenga had perpetrated injustices towards people. She also mentions some other kings who were considered to be good and kind, and who were probably also fair when they exercised judicial power (see" *Healing the Land*", 1997, p. 33 and Williams, 1991, p. 123, 129, 140, 145; See also the conflicting missionary and Ovambo quotations about kings' judicial practices in Loeb, 1962, p. 69–70).

164 Cf. Salokoski, 1992, p. 279 and McKittrick, 1995, p. 47.

165 Salokoski (1992, p. 83) and Williams (1991, p. 114), for example, have emphasized the importance of the kings' ritualistic duties.

166 Clarence-Smith & Moorsom, 1975, p. 369; Hayes, 1992, p. 47.

The allocation of resources was not the only thing that the kings controlled, as they also had the power to regulate practices connected with the agricultural cycle. Harvesting, for example, could commence only after the king had celebrated his harvest ceremony, thus giving his subjects general permission to harvest their crops. Harvesting before receipt of this permission was punished with fines. Similarly cattle could be allowed into the fields to feed on the stubble only after the king had given general permission for this.[167] The aim of such central regulation was probably to minimize conflicts over people allowing cattle into grain fields at different times, thus destroying the crops of those who left reaping until later.[168] A similar aim to minimize harmful effects can be seen in another royal prerogative, that is the king's right to decide when people could begin picking ripe marula fruits.[169] Since these fruits were used to make an intoxicating beverage which was freely consumed during the marula season, it was rational to ensure that the period of more or less general drunkenness was limited. For the sake of safety, the kings also forbade the carrying of weapons during the marula season and fined all those who contravened this ban.[170]

It is worth noting that during his harvest ceremony the king sacrificed porridge made of new sorghum to the spirits[171], apparently in order to ensure that his community would achieve a good harvest the following year. In a similar way, and for the same reason, he sacrificed a portion of *ontsakala* to the spirits every time the expeditions he had sent to Etosha to fetch this plant had returned home.[172]

The two examples above show that the kings also had a role connected with communal productive magic. Another example of this aspect is their role in rainmaking. It may be that the earlier kings were themselves considered to be rainmakers,[173] but even at the end of the nineteenth century, when the rain rites were performed by specialists,[174] the kings had an important secondary role in rainmaking.

There were basically two ways of obtaining rain when the rains had been delayed; either by performing certain communal rainmaking rites[175], or by buying

167 ELC no. 743, p. 1167 & no. 1184, p. 1674 & no. 1418, p. 2000; Tönjes, 1911, p. 125; Loeb, 1962, p. 217–218.

168 McKittrick, 1995, p. 156.

169 See Loeb, 1962, p. 213.

170 Eg. ELC no. 1180, p. 1667–1668; Tönjes, 1911, p. 74–75.

171 Loeb, 1962, p. 217–218.

172 ELC no. 1418, p. 1998–1999. Ontsakala is a herb which grows in ephemeral ponds in an area some two days' walk south of Ondonga. Its odorous bulbs were used for making skin ointment (see ELC no. 207, p. 462).

173 According to Loeb, rainmaking was the kings' prerogative in Uukwanyama for as long as they were circumcised, and therefore they no longer could act as rainmakers after the death of King Haimbili yaHaufiku in 1858. Williams recounts that Nangolo dhAmutenya of Ondonga (died in 1857) was a rainmaking king, as also was Nuuyoma of Uukwambi (died in 1875), according to Hiltunen (see Loeb, 1962, p. 24, 63; Williams, 1991, p. 118; Hiltunen, 1993, p. 86).

174 Martti Rautanen wrote in 1904 that local rainmaking rituals in Ondonga were performed by ritualistic specialists whose status was hereditary within one clan (Rautanen, 1904, p. 19–20). Because the status was hereditary, it can be assumed that such specialist rainmakers had been in existence for a considerable period of time, and that the kings, if they had ever been rainmakers, had probably ceased to perform such rites a long time ago.

175 Since there appear to have been several ways of rainmaking among the Ovambo, we will

rain from outside the community. The former was generally the first resort. Different narratives give somewhat different descriptions of these rites, but they appear in most cases to have included the sacrifice of an entirely black cow with a newborn calf to the spirit of a deceased king beside his grave. The sacrifice itself was performed by circumcised elders, but the king had to provide the cow, either from his own herd or from that of a subject. The king, after consultations with the rainmaking elders, also made the decision as to whether it was necessary to perform the rite.[176] Furthermore, when the rains were delayed the king could declare, and if necessary also enforce, a general ban on work in the fields, so that the dust rising from the fields would not drive the clouds away.[177] If the sacrifice had no effects, the king would summon the rainmaking elders again in order to discuss whether rain should be bought. When this was considered necessary, he would send a delegation to Evale in Southern Angola, because the local king was believed to be the most powerful rainmaker in the region. If rain was bought, the king had to provide his delegation with the necessary goods to pay for it.[178] He also had to find another entirely black cow with a calf, which were needed both as a gift for the king of Evale and for a second rainmaking rite that took place on the way north.[179]

In order to fully understand the role of the kings in rainmaking, it is necessary to deal with some cosmological aspects connected with it. The Ovambo believed that deceased people became ancestral spirits (*aathithi*) who affected the lives of their living relatives. The *aathithi* were usually regarded as protectors and helpers of the living, but if they were angered because of a lack of respect and offerings, they could become a source of misfortune and havoc. It was mainly the responsibility of the clan elders to guarantee the good-will of the clan's *aathithi*.[180] Not all *aathithi* were equally powerful, though. As on earth, it was the *aathithi* of kings who were the most powerful in the afterworld, and it was they who were usually believed to be responsible for withholding the rains during droughts.[181] Since kings were the heads of royal clans, they were also responsible for keeping their ancestors satisfied. Even though they did not perform rainmaking rites themselves, they had to provide the means for doing so (a black cow) and favourable circumstances (a ban on work). In this way they carried out their duty as mediators be-

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concentrate in this context only on communal crisis rites, and then in a considerably simplified form. Seasonal rain rites such as the *Omazila* described by Hahn (1928, p. 3–4) have been omitted. Rainmaking and the role of the kings in it has been described more thoroughly by Hiltunen (1993, p. 72–90) and Salokoski (1992, p. 246–252, 328–343).

176 ELC no. 311, p. 743–744 & no. 391, p. 811–814 & no. 415, p. 843–844 & no. 495, p. 978a & no. 917, p. 1339 & no. 1224, p. 1721–1722. (In the course of the sacrifice the calf was slaughtered well before the cow. Eventually the cow's udder became filled with milk, which began dripping. The symbolism is obvious: black cow represents a rain cloud and dripping milk is rain.)

177 J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 17 Jan. 1913, Eac18, AFMS, NAF; Hiltunen, 1993, p. 76, 80.

178 ELC no. 16, p. 59 & no. 392, p. 814–816 & no. 816, p. 1226 & no. 1384, p. 1930–1933; Salokoski, 1992, p. 132, 333.

179 ELC no. 816, p. 1226 and no. 1384, p. 1933. The calf was killed on the way to Evale and the cow kept on dripping milk during the journey, thus predicting rain. It was then handed over to the rainmaking king as a gift.

180 Aarni, 1982, p. 61–64, 84; Hiltunen, 1993, p. 35–36.

181 Savola, 1916, p. 176; Aarni, 1982, p. 66, 71, 84; Salokoski, 1992, p. 329; Hiltunen, 1993, p. 75, 87.

tween their subjects and their ancestors[182]; a role which was obviously considered to be essential to the well-being of the whole community.

Rainmaking shows that the spirits of deceased kings were particularly important to the living members of an Ovambo community. But there also seems to have been a belief that the power or well-being of a living king was connected with the well-being of his subjects. This can be seen in the custom of the holy fire, which had to be kept constantly burning in the king's homestead during the his lifetime. As this fire was believed to be the symbol of the king's spirit, which gave life, material success and safety to both the king and the whole community, its premature extinction was considered a very bad omen for all.[183] In Salokoski's interpretation, a similar belief that the power or spirit of a living king was the carrier of the power of life for the whole of society is also apparent in the old custom of ritual regicide.[184]

All in all, the Ovambo kings were obviously socially very important and their power, when fully exercised, was great. But were they omnipotent? If one were to believe early travel accounts or missionary writings the answer would be in the affirmative, because both travellers and missionaries tend to describe kings as despots with absolute power, men who ruled as they wished without ever considering the well-being of their subjects.[185] This is of course a stereotype based on the writers' ethnocentric views. The Ovambo kings may have been omnipotent in theory, but in practice their power could be rather limited, as the weak position of the Uukwanyama kings at the end of the nineteenth century clearly demonstrates.

There were several factors in Ovambo society which prevented, or can be assumed to have prevented, the kings from taking full advantage of their royal prerogatives. Firstly, if a king became a despot, he was in danger of facing replacement through either a popular uprising or an elite coup d'état.[186] A milder form of subjects' resistance to the unacceptable use of royal power was flight from community, which, if it took place en masse, could undermine the basis of the king's power. Secondly, even if a king was not concerned about the possible reactions of com-

182 Cf. Williams, 1991, p. 99.

183 ELC no. 1395, p. 1951–1952; Hahn, 1928, p. 17. See also Williams, 1991, p. 110.

184 Liljeblad's collection has several narratives suggesting that a dying king could not be allowed to die naturally but had to be killed on his deathbed by his successor. This was done because the new king needed his spirit in order to reign successfully. If the king had not been killed, his spirit would have escaped (see Salokoski, 1992, p. 295–299, particularly pages 295 and 299).

185 On early travel accounts, see McKittrick, 1995, p. 31–36 and McKittrick, 2002, p. 29–30, 69. On missionary writings, see Salokoski 1992, p. 95–99. Interestingly enough, the image of an absolute despot was preserved in published missionary writings well into the post-Second World War period (see e.g. Peltola, 1958, p. 21–22 and *Ambomaa*, 1959, p.15).

186 The Ovambos' oral tradition recognises at least three kings whose cruelty went so far that they were finally either murdered or exiled by their subjects: Haita of Uukwanyama (murdered), Nkandi of Ongandjera (exiled) and Kampaku, the last king of Ombalantu (murdered) (see Williams, 1991, p. 121, 133, 136). There may also have been a fourth, King Namadi of Uukwanyama, who died in suspicious circumstances in 1884 or 1885 after only a short reign. There has been some speculation that he was poisoned, possibly by his omalenga. (On the Namadi case, see Estermann, 1976, p. 124; Hayes, 1992, p. 92; "*Healing the Land*", 1997, p. 35–36.)

moners, he still had to avoid violating the rights of the elite in the community, i.e. the *omalenga* and headmen, for if offended, they could hamper the execution of the king's orders. Furthermore, unreliable headmen could become a risk if there was a danger of intrusion by an external enemy. King Mandume of Uukwanyama learned this the hard way in 1917 when he was deposed by the South African Expeditionary Force. When the war broke out, majority of his headmen sided with the enemy, probably partly because Mandume's re-centralisation of power into his own hands had offended their sense of the proper division of power.[187] Thirdly, in the light of certain pieces of information, it is not at all certain that the kings were allowed to make all decisions without the consent of their advisers. It appears that they usually followed the advice which they were given, or when it came to relations with other communities, were bound to act in accordance with such advice or according to generally accepted rules.[188] And finally, there was one person whose activities could limit a king's use of his royal powers – his mother. She could act as regent during the king's minority and later she would act as a close advisor to her son, and one whose advice was usually followed. Furthermore, she had a court of her own and a district over which she ruled.[189] If she was strong-willed, she could in practice rule over her son. Such was the case in early twentieth-century Ondonga where, according to occasional comments by Finnish missionaries, the real ruler was neither King Kambonde kaNgula (1909–1912), nor his brother and successor Martin yaKadhikwa (1912–1942), but their mother Mutaleni.[190] The king's aunt could apparently also be a very prominent person, as obviously was Nekoto, aunt of King Nande of Uukwanyama.[191]

Violence in intra-community and inter-community relations

The use of violence as a means of administration and politics has always been a very common feature of most human communities, and the Ovambo kingdoms were no exception in this respect. The kings in particular seem to have used violence both against their own subjects and against neighbouring communities. The

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187 See Silvester, 1995, p. 24–29.

188 Brincker, 1900, p. 23; Rautanen, 1903, p. 336; Savola, 1916, p. 85; Hahn, 1928, p. 18; Loeb, 1962, p. 27; Clarence-Smith & Moorsom, 1975, p. 369; Salokoski, 1992, p. 174, 176.

189 See e.g. Beantwortung des fragebogens... von M. Rautanen, 1913, Frage no. 26, p. 5 and Frage no. 93, p. 16; Beantwortung des fragebogens... von A. Wulfhorst, 1913, Frage no. 93, p. 40; Rautanen, 1903, p. 338; Tönjes, 1911, p. 118; Lehmann 1954/55, p. 298; Vedder, 1985, p. 71.

190 A. Pettinen to J. Mustakallio 6 Oct. 1912, Eac17; V. Alho to K. Paasio 21 Jan. 1935, Eac36; Copy I. Saukkonen to Ovamboland church administration 25 March 1935, Eac36. All in AFMS, NAF; Miettinen, 2000, p. 449 footnote 4. ** The missionaries' views about Mutaleni were shared by Native Commissioner Hahn. After Martin's death in 1942, Mutaleni was again actively intriguing to get a man of her choice on the throne, but this time her plans failed because of Hahn's intervention. Without it her candidate would no doubt have been chosen, because of Mutaleni's spiritual hold over the tribe and the tradition that she was the mother of the Ndonga people, as Hahn put it (see NCO Annual Report 1942, p. 1–3. 11/1, NAO, NAN).

intensity of this violence and its purpose altered to some extent in the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries, however.

Before the mid-19th century the use of intra-community violence appears to have been aimed in the first place at the enforcement of law and order. It was thus of a punitive nature. If somebody disobeyed the king's commands, broke taboos or committed some other serious crime, the king (or his headman) could send a raiding party of several armed men to the culprit's homestead. As a punishment, the party would steal the owner's cattle, demolish his homestead and in some cases kill the inmates.[192] Wars between communities may have been fought because of controversies over rights of pasturage, because of questions of prestige, or to avenge affronts,[193] but not in order to conquer territory[194]. The main rationale of these inter-community wars was nevertheless economic gain, i.e. raids on other communities were organized in order to gain access to cattle and captives. If a raid was successful, which it was not always, the booty of cattle was divided between the king and those who participated in the raid. The captives were held until their relatives paid ransom for them,[195] and if they were not redeemed, they became slaves to their captors.[196] It is worth noting that Ovambo slavery did not include dehumanizing aspects of the kind that characterized slavery in ante-bellum US. Slaves could be sold and their condition was lifelong, but in other respects their social status seems to have been similar to that of their "owner's" children.[197]

During the latter half of the 19th century the use of violence altered in character considerably. Inter-community violence was no longer primarily a means of punishment but became a means by which kings could obtain wealth, primarily cattle.[198] Furthermore, raids both within and between communities became more frequent. This increased use of violence is obviously one reason why Meredith

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191 On Nekoto and her status, see A. Wulfhorst, Haschipala – Erinnerungen eines alten Missionares von dem, was er unter den Heiden erlebte (typescript), s.d., p. 38-39, 50. C/k:22, AVEM; A. Wulfhorst, Nekoto und Haischi in Zwistigkeit (typescript), s.d. C/k:22, AVEM; Tönjes, 1911, p. 116, 164–181.

192 ELC no. 412, p. 842; ELC no. 498, p. 980–981; Loeb, 1962, p. 70, 83; Williams, 1991, p. 107; Salokoski, 1992, p. 191–192.

193 Estermann, 1976, p. 126. See also Hahn, 1928, p. 19–20.

194 Wars aimed at gaining territory would not have made much sense in pre-colonial Ovamboland, as the communities were separated by belts of uninhabited forest (see chapter "Land and economy". Cf. also Loeb, 1962, p. 81 and Williams, 1991, p. 100).

195 E.g. Siiskonen, 1990, p. 203–205; Hayes, 1992, p. 52–53. On preparations and tactics for raids, see ELC no. 30, p. 75–79; Tönjes, 1911, p. 121–125; Estermann, 1976, p. 126–128.

196 E.g. Sckär, Ovamboland, s.d. p. 29, AVEM; Beantwortung des fragebogens... von A. Wulfhorst, 1913, Frage no. 27, p. 28 and Frage no. 103, p. 41–42; Hahn, 1928, p. 23; Estermann, 1976, p. 128.

197 See Sckär, Ovamboland, s.d. p. 29, AVEM; Beantwortung des fragebogens... von A. Wulfhorst, 1913, Frage no. 28, p. 28; Savola, 1916, p. 96–97; Loeb, 1962, p. 124–126; Williams, 1991, p. 109, 114.

198 It is not clear whether cattle thefts had actually been part of the earlier punitive raids or whether they were included only during the latter half of the century. The second interpretation is supported by some pieces of information given by Loeb (1962, p. 31, 83), Estermann (1976, p. 125) and Williams (1991, p. 107–108). There appears to have been a clear conceptual difference between punitive raids and internal raids organized for obtaining cattle. The latter type, known as *okashava,* is said to have emerged, both as a practice and a word, only in the 1870s or 1880s.

McKittrick refers to the late 19th century as "an Age of Uncertainty" in Ovamboland.[199]

The main reason for the new violence was the coming of European traders to Ovamboland and the involvement of the Ovambo rulers in trade with them. Even though the Ovambo had probably had indirect contacts with Europeans before the mid-19th century, and even though the first known visit of Europeans to Ovamboland had taken place in 1851[200], direct larger-scale trading between the kings and the Europeans first began in the 1860s. By this time a situation had emerged in which the demand and supply on both sides could be met. The big game populations of Hereroland and the coastal areas of Angola had almost been depleted because of excessive hunting, and at the same time the Ovambo kings had learned that their defence capabilities against neighbouring peoples were insufficient, because unlike their neighbours, they did not possess firearms. This became particularly evident in 1860, when Jonker Afrikaner[201] made a successful raiding expedition into Ovamboland. Therefore, the kings now began allowing Portuguese trading parties from Mossamedes and mixed European traders from Walvis Bay to enter their countries. They thus received the sought-after firearms and ammunition, as well as some luxury goods, and paid for these things mostly with ivory and ostrich feathers.[202]

The context of trade changed in the 1880s, when excessive commercial hunting had led to the depletion of the big game populations in Ovamboland as well, and neither ivory nor ostrich feathers were any longer available for trade. At the same time the importing of arms into Ovamboland from the south came to an end because of the outbreak of the Nama–Herero War. Both these factors, together with the increased costs of transport from Walvis Bay and export duties, led to a near halt in Walvis Bay–Ovamboland trade. Apart from some arms smuggling and few years of legal arms trading around 1890, this quiet period lasted until the late 1890s, when German traders began buying cattle from Ovamboland and selling horses, clothes and spirits.[203]

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199 McKittrick, 1998, p. 245. On insecurity in the late 19th century, see also McKittrick, 2002, p. 70–74.

200 The first visitors were the explorers Francis Galton and Charles John Andersson, who were on they way to Lake Ngami. Francis Galton was a cousin of Charles Darwin and later acquired fame/notoriety as the founder of eugenics.

201 Jonker Afrikaner was an Oorlam (Nama) chief from southern Namibia. By the early 1850s he had subjugated the Herero of central Namibia and aimed at spreading his rule further north (see Vedder, 1985, p. 289–293, 308–309)

202 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 91-92, 96–103, 107–111. (The need to improve their defence was not the only reason why the kings became involved in trade with the Europeans, as their keen interest in buying luxury goods clearly shows. Meredith McKittrick has pointed out that both guns and luxury goods became important external symbols of power in Ovambo society, and therefore the kings wanted to obtain them in order to stand out from the rest of the people. Thus European goods also had a symbolic value, which the kings used politically to solve the problems of maintaining centralized power. This political aspect explains their "apparently reckless consumerism" (i.e. keen interest in obtaining "useless" consumer goods) which had such devastating effects in the form of increased violence. For an analysis of the symbolic value of European goods, see McKittrick, 1995, p. 68–74 and McKittrick, 2002, p. 56–57, 59–61.)

203 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 140–146, 170, 177–178.

The northern trade with the Angolan-based Portuguese was not discontinued in the 1880s, and at this point the role of the Portuguese as a source of goods became essential from the kings' point of view. The Portuguese were still able and willing to sell arms, alcohol and other items to the kings provided that the payment was made in cattle or in slaves, the latter being needed for the plantations of the Portuguese colonial empire. Initially the kings had been reluctant to enter into slave trading with the Portuguese, but now they did not really have any choice, and therefore they began to sell war captives and people accused of witchcraft to the slave traders. Uukwambi and Uukwanyama in particular became centres of the slave trade in Ovamboland.[204]

As can be imagined, the new violence in Ovamboland was connected with the emergence of cattle and slaves as merchandise. To obtain these, the kings organized raids on other communities more frequently than before, and also raided their subjects' cattle.[205] But even this new violence had to be kept within reasonable limits, so that it did not endanger the kings' position or the survival of the communities. In Uukwanyama the internal raids organised by King Namadi aroused bitter antagonism towards him, and therefore his successor, Ueyulu, concentrated more on wars with neighbouring communities in order to maintain peace at home.[206] But even wars between the eastern communities (Ondonga, Uukwanyama and Uukwambi) would in the long run have become too devastating, because these were the communities that traded most actively with the Europeans and were therefore well armed and most capable of conducting more violent raids[207]. They therefore concluded so-called "blood peaces" between them,[208] and concentrated on raiding their weaker western and northern neighbours (i.e. those that had less modern arm).[209]

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204 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 103–104, 111, 152–155, 178–180, 198–199. Hayes, 1992, p. 91–92. On slavery in Angola and the slave trade with that territory, see Clarence-Smith, 1979, particularly p. 15, 30–32, 76–77.

205 On various general aspects of violence connected with trade, see Siiskonen, 1990, p. 206–209, 213–219; Hayes, 1992, p. 89–94; McKittrick, 1995, p. 63–68; Kreike, 1996, p. 24–28. See also *Healing the land*, 1997, p. 36, 38–39.

206 Loeb, 1962, p. 31–32; Hayes, 1992, p. 89.

207 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 208–209; McKittrick, 1995, p. 63.

208 The earliest "blood peace" agreement appears to have been the one between Ondonga and Uukwambi, which, according to Siiskonen, was concluded as early as 1868. Whatever the exact year may have been, a state of peace already existed in 1870, when the Finnish missionaries came to Ovamboland. The second peace was concluded between Ondonga and Uukwanyama. The year Siiskonen gives for this is 1891, which is probably correct, because a date in the early 1890s is also supported by Savola and Wulfhorst. Sckär, on the other hand, claims that this peace was concluded during the reign of King Mweshipandeka of Uukwanyama, i.e. before 1882. The last peace seems to have been the one between Uukwanyma and Uukwambi. Even though Sckär claims that this peace, too, was concluded during Mweshipandeka's reign, it was probably of later origin because a notable raid from Uukwanyama into Uukwambi is known to have taken place in 1893. It may be that the peace was made soon after that, because it was said in 1914 that the "blood peace" between the two kingdoms had been in existence for a long time. (See Sckär, Ovamboland, s.d. p. 27, AVEM; M. Rautanen to K. Tötterman 28 Feb. 1893, Eac8, AFMS, NAF; K. Koivu's Annual Report (Elim) 1914, mmm 20 Jan. 1915, Appendix 17, Hha7, AFMS, NAF; Beantwortung des fragebogens... von. A. Wulfhorst, 1913, Frage no. 101, p. 41; Savola, 1916, p. 90; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 209–210.)

209 Loeb, 1962, p. 32; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 212; McKittrick, 1995, p. 66–67; Kreike, 1996, p. 55; McKittrick, 2002, p. 58–59.

The "blood peaces" were a stabilising factor in an otherwise violent period, because these agreements were respected well, though apparently not perfectly, by all parties.[210] A peace of this kind would be ratified by the representatives of the two kings in a forest between the communities, whereupon they would sacrifice an ox, the blood of which would seal the peace. The breaking of such a "blood peace" by attacking the other community was a sacrilege, and it was believed any king who did such a thing would soon die. Likewise, any subject who brought stolen cattle across the point where the sacrifice had taken place was to be killed, because his action was considered a mortal threat to the king's life. Furthermore, there was a belief that anybody who brought anything stolen across such a sacred border would break his leg.[211] It is thus small wonder that "blood peaces" were not easily broken, since they were based on such severe threats of celestial or earthly punishment. The importance of not breaking a "blood peace" was seen in 1914, for example, when King Iipumbu of Uukwambi planned to attack Uukwanyama after King Mandume had had some of Iipumbu's delegates murdered. Despite his fury over the incident, Iipumbu finally decided not to go to war because it would have broken the "blood peace" between the two kingdoms.[212]

The use of violence was still increasing at the turn of the century, at least in Uukwanyama and the western communities.[213] Two reasons for this can be pointed out: the rinderpest disaster of 1897, which killed most of the Ovambo cattle and thus led to increased raiding as people tried to regain their wealth by all means available,[214] and the increased threat of a colonial takeover of Ovamboland (by the Germans, who ruled SWA proper, and still more probably by the Portuguese, who were advancing in Angola[215]). This latter reason meant that there was a need to improve defences by obtaining more arms, which led to a desire to obtain more cattle or slaves to pay for them, leading in turn to increased raiding.[216] But at the same time the possibilities for obtaining arms declined as the Germans put a stop to practically all legal trading between Ovamboland and SWA proper in 1906 by making crossing of the border subject to a government licence and by prohibiting exports of arms to Ovamboland and imports of cattle from there.[217] The Portuguese also forbade sales of firearms to the Ovambo, and even though there was some smuggling[218] , it can be assumed that in the long run the restraining of European trading in Ovamboland would have curtailed raiding.

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210 Scattered pieces of information hinting at lasting "blood peaces" are to be found in Sckär, Ovamboland, s.d, p. 27, AVEM; Loeb, 1962, p. 94; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 209.

211 Sckär, Ovamboland, s.d. p. 27, AVEM; ELC no. 103, p. 237 & no. 277, p. 658–659; Beantwortung des fragebogens... von A. Wulfhorst, 1913, Frage no.101, p. 41. See also Loeb, 1962, p. 94 and Siiskonen, 1990, p. 209.

212 K. Koivu's Annual Report (Elim) 1914, mmm 20 Jan. 1915, Appendix 17, Hha7, AFMS, NAF. For two more similar examples from 1891 and 1892, see Siiskonen, 1990, p. 209–210.

213 See "*Healing the Land*", 1997, p. 41–42; McKittrick, 1995, p. 74–75; Kreike, 1996, p. 46, 61–63.

214 Chapter "Land and economy".

215 See chapter "Migrant labour and colonial rule".

216 Kreike, 1996, p. 53–55, 59–60.

217 Pritchard, 1915, Annexure 1, p. 14–15; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 187–188, 240; Eirola, 1992, p. 191–192.

218 Clarence-Smith & Moorsom, 1975, p. 375; Kreike, 1996, p. 60.

Uukwanyama during the early years of King Mandume's reign was an exception to the general pattern, because there the use of violence was reduced as a consequence of Mandume's recentralization of power. As part of his scheme, he successfully forbade the *omalenga* and headmen to organize raids of their own. Raiding in and from Uukwanyama did not cease completely, but it became rarer once it had been made a royal prerogative again.[219] When Mandume announced his ban on independent raiding, he allegedly said that excessive raids would devastate the economy of Uukwanyama and detract from its relations with friendly communities.[220] It is not far-fetched to assume that Mandume's underlying idea here, as when he banned the unnecessary use of firearms, was to strengthen Uukwanyama for a foreseeable war with the Portuguese. If this assumption is correct, then the threat of a colonial takeover should be seen as having been capable of either increasing or reducing violence in Ovamboland, depending on how elite reacted to the threat. If they emphasised the need to obtain more firearms, violence was bound to increase, but if they considered the unity of people to be an important means of defence, the use of violence would probably be curtailed.

Mandume's success in curtailing violence was short-lived, though. The high point of violence in Uukwanyma, as in all the other communities, was reached in 1915 and 1916, during which years Ovamboland was in chaos because of the devastating famine which made the desperate people resort to desperate deeds in order to survive. Thus the causes of violence were different from those that had applied on previous occasions. Finnish missionaries working in Ondonga, Uukwambi, Ongandjera and Uukwaluudhi reported that thefts, robberies and raids of cattle and grain were commonplace everywhere, and even murders and infanticides had occurred.[221] As the missionary Kalle Petäjä reported on the situation in Ongandjera:

> "During this terrible famine there is only one question which is in everybody's mind: 'What do we eat and what do we drink?' In this hard struggle for survival a new maxim has emerged: 'Help yourself'. People have been forced to abandon all ideas of mercy, truth and righteousness and have replaced them with self-interest. Falsity, deception, theft, robbery and even murder have become sources of livelihood for many, and unfortunately, many Christians are equal with the heathens in these vices."[222]

219 "*Healing the land*", 1997, p. 50–56; Hayes, 1992, p. 170; Hayes, 1993, p. 101–103; Kreike, 1996, p. 68, 70.

220 "*Healing the land*", 1997, p. 50, 53.

221 K. Björklund to M. Tarkkanen 3 Jan. 1916 & E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 11 March 1916, Eac20, AFMS, NAF; K. Björklund's Annual Report 1915 (Olukonda and Ondangua) & E. Liljeblad's Annual Report 1915 (Oniipa) & N. Väänänen's Annual Report 1915 (Ongandjera) & K. J. Petäjä's Annual Report 1915 (Uukwambi and Ongandjera) & V. Alho's Annual Report 1915 (Uukwaluudhi) , mmm 22 March 1916, Appendices 2, 3, 14, 15, 17, Hha7, AFMS, NAF; Ein kurzer Überblick über die Hungersnot im Ambolande von M. Rautanen (26 Dec. 1915), p. 2, IV (vol. 11) RCO, NAN; Pritchard, 1915, par. 22 p. 4 and par. 30 p. 5. On violence during the famine, see also Hayes, 1992, p. 200–202 and McKittrick, 1995, p. 76–77.

222 K. J. Petäjä's Annual Report 1915 (Uukwambi and Ongandjera), mmm 22 March 1916, Appendix 15, AFMS, NAF. (Transl. KM)

Things were, if possible, even worse in Uukwanyama than in other communities, because there the famine was combined with power vacuum. King Mandume had suffered a decisive defeat in a battle against the Portuguese in August 1915, and had had to flee to southern Uukwanyma, where he placed himself under the protection of the South Africans, whose first representative, Major Pritchard, had arrived in Ovamboland a little earlier. Protection was granted on condition that Mandume did not operate in northern Uukwanyama, which was considered to be Portuguese territory.[223] With this subordination Mandume lost a considerable part of his power and prestige, and northern Uukwanyama became an area which nobody controlled. Therefore criminal or violent activities spread in all levels of society. Independent headmen as well as bands of "masterless men" raided people's cattle and grain and forced them off their farms. Being a lawless area, northern Uukwanyma also became a base for bandits organizing raids to the south.[224] The violence was apparently also compounded by raiding on the part of the Portuguese troops.[225]

The years 1915 and 1916 marked the high-point of violence, but also its final bow before leaving the stage (except for a few "da capos"). Within a couple of years after the famine, the South African colonial administration in Ovamboland[226], although weak in terms of the number of officials, had been able to pacify the area under its jurisdiction to a considerable degree. One of the main aims of the early administration was to make Ovamboland peaceful enough that men would feel secure to leave their homes for a year or so and go to the south as migrant workers. The South Africans therefore introduced harsh penalties for raiding and killing, and succeeded in terminating raids by the eastern Ovambo on western communities. They also forbade the use of capital punishments by the kings and stressed the importance of settling disputes in court and not by blood feuds. Furthermore, they were able to curtail arms smuggling with a strict system of entry permits for non-governmental and non-missionary Europeans wishing to go to Ovamboland, combined with the creation of intelligence networks to control European mobility in the area.[227]

The emergence of the *Pax Africana Australis* appears to have been a fairly rapid process, but with a lasting outcome (if one is to believe the colonial records). By the end of 1917 officials were already boasting of how easily they had been able to create order and end the violence in Uukwanyama, less than a year after they had dethroned King Mandume. They had to admit, though, that there still were occa-

223 Hayes, 1992, p. 193–198; Silvester, 1995, p. 9–12.
224 Hayes, 1992, p. 207–210, 214–216; Kreike, 1996, p. 86–88, 101–105.
225 Silvester, 1995, p. 13.
226 On the emergence of the South African administration see chapter "Migrant labour and colonial rule".
227 Hayes, 1992, p. 241–244; McKittrick, 1995, p. 91–93, 111–112. The colonial administration was unable to end arms smuggling entirely, at least not before the 1930s, as the Native Commissioner noted in 1930 that a "certain amount of smuggling in arms" into Ovamboland was taking place both from SWA proper and from Portuguese Angola (see NCO Annual Report 1930, p. 2–3, 11/1, NAO, NAN).

sional robberies taking place in the uninhabited forest areas between communities.[228] The next year the head of the Ovamboland administration, Major Manning, and his assistant, Lt. Hahn, made a tour to the western communities, where they received reports on cattle raids carried out by the Mbalantu. After reaching Ombalantu and having had the accusations verified, Manning organized public meetings in order to warn the population in general, and the headmen in particular, that they should not indulge in raids. He also had five homesteads of alleged raiders burned and three people flogged. According to Manning, these actions made Ombalantu at least a comparatively more orderly and peaceful place.[229]

In 1930 Native Commissioner Hahn reported that no intertribal fighting or armed raids of any consequence had taken place since around 1923,[230] and violence in Ovamboland had apparently indeed been reduced by the mid-1920s, because the Native Commissioner's reports on the general situation in the area became rather standardized, simply stating that there had been no disturbances in the country – or at least no serious ones, just some occasional minor squabbles.[231] Apart from the somewhat more serious troubles with King Iipumbu of Uukwambi in the mid-1920s and early 1930s,[232] these squabbles consisted of rows, thefts, minor cattle raids and some shooting incidents which took place particularly during the Marula fruit season. There were also clashes over waterholes at times of droughts.[233]

Since the colonial records are, understandably, rather unreliable sources when it comes to the advancement of peace and order under colonial rule, it is interesting to take a short look at the missionaries' documents in order to see what they reveal about the prevalence of violence in Ovamboland during the early colonial period, i.e. between the famine of 1915/16 and the Second World War. In many respects the missionary documents substantiate the information given by the colonial records. In the mid-1930s two missionaries noted that murders, robberies and raids did not occur in the same way as earlier. They did not attribute this to the colonial administration, though, but saw the trend as a result of the civilizing influence of Christianity.[234] The information given by the colonial administration concerning the end of inter-community raids is also supported by the fact that there is only one reference to such raids in the missionary documents after 1916. In his letter in 1917, the missionary Heikki Saari, who worked in Uukwambi, made a general comment that the Mbalantu are known cattle thieves who carry out raids on other communities.[235]

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228 Resident Commissioner's Annual Report 1917, p. 7–8 and C. E. Fairlie's (Government Representative, Namakunde) Annual Report 1917, p. 1–2, RCO (9), NAN. (On the fall of Mandume, see chapter "Migrant labour and colonial rule".)

229 Resident Commissioner Ovamboland to the Secretary for the Protectorate 27 Oct. 1918 (N.W. Ovamboland, Official tour, Measures against Ombarantu cattle raiders etc.), RCO (9), NAN.

230 NCO Annual Report 1930, p. 2, 11/1, NAO, NAN.

231 E.g. NCO Annual Report 1926, p. 4; Ibid. 1927, p. 1; Ibid. 1935, p. 2-3. All in 11/1, NAO, NAN.

232 See chapter "Migrant labour and colonial rule".

233 NCO Monthly Report July–August 1928, p. 1; Ibid. October 1928, p. 2–3; Ibid. Feb. 1931, p. 1; NCO Annual Report 1932, p. 1; Ibid. 1934, p. 6. All in 11/1, NAO, NAN.

234 A. Hänninen to K.A. Paasio 13 Sept. 1935, Eac36, AFMS, NAF; V. Alho to U. Paunu 6 Nov. 1937, Eac38, AFMS, NAF.

235 H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 11 Sept. 1917, Eac 20, AFMS, NAF.

As far as intra-community violence is concerned, it obviously still existed but was less prevalent than before. There were temporal and regional differences, however. The heightened violence during the Marula season was reflected in an increased number of wounded persons who were brought to the mission stations for medical treatment, as in Tsandi in 1924[236]. Also, the famine around 1930 was said to have increased the number of robberies in Ovamboland, causing Ombalantu to receive several refugee families whose grain stores had been robbed in their home communities of Ondonga and Uukwambi.[237] It is interesting that the refugees had decided to head for Ombalantu, because only a couple of years earlier the territory had witnessed serious clashes between indigenous Mbalantu and "strangers", Mbandja refugees who had arrived there in 1915 after Ombandja had been re-occupied by the Portuguese. The arrival of the Mbandja obviously created much animosity, because they carried out raids on their host community.[238] This animosity turned into violence in 1928, when the Mbalantu began to evict the Mbandja from their homesteads by force. According to the resident Finnish missionary, Heikki Saari, Ombalantu was almost in a state of total anarchy for weeks and many robberies took place. But Saari also stated that, although the Mbalantu were still barbarians, they no longer dared to use arms as freely as before.[239]

Apart from Ombalantu, where inner tensions created ground for potential violence, there were two other places where violence occasionally reached considerable heights. The first was the area around the parish of Oshigambo in Ondonga. It appears that Oshigambo suffered from at least a few raids annually in the early 1920s, and that raiding was so extensive in 1925 that at least 20 wards (one third of the total) were attacked, and their whole population in some cases sought refuge in Uukwanyama. Raiding continued in 1926 and 1927, and there were still fears in 1928 that extensive raiding could take place. They were said to have begun as punitive measures taken by the king against disobedient areas, but as more and more people joined the raiding parties the situation turned into common looting.[240] Two points are worth noting here. Firstly, Oshigambo had had bad harvests in 1926 and 1927 and there was a local scarcity of food,[241] which may have increased the tendency to resort to raiding, and secondly, Oshigambo was the northernmost outlying area of Ondonga in the 1920s, so that it is possible that it was not entirely under royal control and that local headmen could organize their own raids.[242]

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236 A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 15 March 1924, Eac24, AFMS, NAF.

237 H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 2 May 1930, Eac30, AFMS, NAF; Viktor Alho's Annual Report (general report) 1929, mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 1, Hha11, AFMS, NAF.

238 See Hayes, 1992, p. 189–192, 199–200 and McKittrick, 1995, p. 126.

239 H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 28 Sept. 1928, Eac28, AFMS, NAF.

240 E. Närhi to M. Tarkkanen 16 July 1926 and 9 Sept. 1927, Eac26–27; I. Saukkonen to M. Tarkkanen 28 May 1928, Eac28; E. Närhi's Annual Report 1925 (Oshigambo and Oshitaji), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1926, Appendix 15, Hha9. All in AFMS, NAF.

241 E. Närhi to M. Tarkkanen 16 July 1926 and 31 Oct. 1927, Eac26–27, AFMS, NAF.

242 This idea is supported by something which the missionary Ilmari Saukkonen wrote in 1928. He reported that one headman was planning a raid and tried to join forces with other headmen so that he could pressure the king to allow raiding. See I. Saukkonen to M. Tarkkanen 28 May 1928, Eac28, AFMS, NAF.

Whether raiding in Oshigambo came to an end in 1928, or whether it was just reduced, we do not know, as the missionaries' documents do not refer to any raids in the area until 1943, when "raiding and evictions from fields have become a sort of fashion again" and "Oshigambo has become a common raiding ground for royals because there is no member of the royal clan living in the area".[243]

The other area troubled by violence was Uukwambi, where it appears to have been directed particularly against Christians, although non-Christians were not spared, either. The missionaries had a simple (perhaps even simplistic) explanation for this violence, that it was caused, directly or indirectly, by King Iipumbu, by his fear of losing power (to the missionaries), which was combined with his erratic character and worsening alcoholism.[244] Violence was not equally prevalent all the time during Iipumbu's reign, however, but there seem to have been two periods of intensification. The first of these was from 1918 to 1922, when the king used violence particularly against young, newly converted Christians, the men among whom were flogged and many had to flee from Uukwambi. Potential converts were also threatened, and at least once, 27.2.1921, the king's troops surrounded the Elim mission station and thrashed all the people who were on their way to the service.[245] But the Christians were still said to have been better protected against the king's actions than the non-Christians,[246] many of whom were accused of witchcraft, flogged and then exiled.[247]

The second outburst of violence in Uukwambi began in 1929 and lasted practically until King Iipumbu was toppled by the colonial administration in 1932. The targets, forms and source of this violence were basically the same as earlier, but the use of violence appears to have been more extensive than around 1920. Christians were again targeted and much intimidation was caused by Iipumbu's wish to force Christian girls to participate in ohango. Several families with girls of ohango age had to flee the country.[248] There are also references to sexual violence, stating that Iipumbu had girls abducted and then raped them.[249] Apart from girls, the other group which was in danger was Ovambo teachers. Iipumbu had several of them

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243 H. Saari's Annual Report 1943 (Oshigambo–Oshitaji), mmm 12-13 Jan. 1944, Appendix 14, Hha20, AFMS, NAF.

244 E.g. R. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 22 March 1924, Eac24; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 31 March 1929 and 5 March 1931, Eac29–30; O. Aho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30. All in AFMS, NAF.

245 S. and A. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 10 July 1918, Eac21; H. Saari to the Board of Directors of the FMS 3 March 1921, Eac22; S. Aarni's Annual Report 1918 (Elim), mmm 24 Feb. 1919, Appendix 21, Hha7; Elim station Annual Report 1919, mmm 13 Jan. 1920, unnumbered appendix, Hha8; H. Saari's Annual Report 1920 (Western communities), mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 17, Hha8; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1922 (Elim), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1923, Appendix 11, Hha8. All in AFMS, NAF.

246 K. Petäjä to M. Tarkkanen 23 Nov. 1922, Eac23, AFMS, NAF.

247 O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1922 (Elim), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1923, Appendix 11, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.

248 O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 15 July 1929 and 18 Dec. 1929, Eac29; O. Aho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 31 July 1931; O. Aho's Annual Report 1931 (Elim), mmm 13–14 Jan 1932, Appendix 35, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF.

249 O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 18 Dec. 1929, Eac29 and 5 March 1931, Eac30; O. Aho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 22 Oct. 1931, Eac30 and 15 June 1932, Eac31. All in AFMS, NAF.

thrashed and many had to flee.[250] The local missionary was not entirely safe, either, and there were threats against his life.[251] It appears that Iipumbu was now ready to use violence against Christians on a large scale. This became evident at New Year 1932, when he ordered some 200 armed men to surround the Elim station for several days. On New Year's Day the king's troops ended the church service by shooting outside the church, and two days later all the people trying to come to the station were caught and beaten.[252]

As in the early 1920s, Iipumbu did not use violence only against Christians, but against all his subjects. The local missionary again reported that Iipumbu fabricated masses of accusations of witchcraft against people, who were then beaten, robbed of their property and exiled. He also claims that Iipumbu organized raids within Uukwambi to obtain cattle and grain. Fear prevailed, and many people fled the country on gaining the first hint that they had aroused the king's suspicions in some way.[253] In his extensive report on the situation in Uukwambi in 1931, the missionary Aho summarized the prevaling situation by saying that the king was often suffering from *delirium tremens* and was afraid of losing his power, and he therefore committed the most dreadful and senseless acts which nobody dared to object to. Instead everybody simply had to accompany him, by saying "yes, Father" or "yes, Kalunga [God]".[254]

All in all, the above examples show that a certain amount of violence was prevalent in colonial Ovamboland. The picture could further be elaborated by listing cases of violence, or threats of violence, against individual Christians in all the communities, as the missionary documents contain plenty of these, but that would not alter the basic conclusion, that early colonial Ovamboland was a less violent place than the late pre-colonial territory had been. This and the role of the colonial administration in the pacifying process was noted by Aho in one letter written when the situation in Uukwambi was at its worst, in which he compared Uukwambi unfavourably with Uukwanyama, which was ruled by a council of headmen under the supervision of colonial officials, by saying that Uukwanyama

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250 O. Aho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 22 Oct. 1931, Eac30; O. Aho's Annual Report 1931 (Elim), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 35, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF.

251 In June 1931 Aho went to Iipumbu's homestead to ask what the king had done to one Ovambo teacher. When he left and was walking away, several shots were fired after him but, as he reports, not at him. Six months later, when the conflict between Aho and Iipumbu had reached its heights, Iipumbu threatened verbally that he would kill Aho and have his station burned. See O. Aho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30 and V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen to 16 Jan. 1932, Eac31, AFMS, NAF.

252 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 16 Jan. 1932, Eac31, AFMS, NAF.

253 O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 15 July 1929, 28 June 1930, 23 Jan. 1931, 5 March 1931, Eac29–30; O. Aho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 2 July 1931, 10 July 1931, 10 Oct. 1931, 22 Oct. 1931, 20 Aug. 1932, Eac30–31; O. Aho's Annual Report 1929 (Elim), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 44, Hha11; O. Aho's Annual Report 1931 (Elim), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 35, Hha11; L. Levänen's Annual Report 1931 (Elim), mmm 13-14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 36. All in AFMS, NAF.

254 O. Aho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF. On Iipumbu's way of using violence, partly based on oral evidence, and for one interpretation of its causes, see Hartmann, 1998, particularly p. 275–285.

seemed to be living in freedom under foreign rule while the curse of Uukwambi was its indigenous ruler.[255]

Some aspects of religion and cosmology

The question of whether the original religion of the Ovambo was basically monotheistic has been disputed. Missionaries and missionary-anthropologists report that the Ovambo had a rather vague idea about one supreme being or god, *Kalunga*, who had created the earth and its people, but who since then had not been much concerned about the well-being or misery of mortals.[256] In other words, Kalunga would be a typical *Deus otiosus*. Teddy Aarni, who has studied the Kalunga concept, is not happy with such a simplified description. According to him, the Ovambo image of Kalunga was so vague and included so many contradictory elements[257] that it cannot be characterized with any single Western scholarly term. Ovambo religion was neither monotheistic nor polytheistic, neither euhemeristic nor pantheistic.[258] He also questions the idea that Kalunga can be considered to be a god at all (in the western sense of the word) or a creator.[259]

Even though Kalunga was vaguely known, some connotations connected with him/her/it can be taken up without doing too much injustice to the multiplicity of the concept. Kalunga was not a god in the sense that there was any worshipping of him, any cult or even any pictures, although the king was considered to be his terrestrial symbol. Neither was Kalunga a divine judge who rewarded or punished people after death for their earthly deeds.[260] Kalunga was something more diffuse than just a personified high god. It was a basic force which was ultimately responsible for everything that was essential for life, or anything that was unfamiliar, un-

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255 O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 5 March 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF.

256 Tönjes, 1911, p. 193–194; Närhi, 1929, p. 9–15; Hopeasalmi, 1946, p. 13–17; Peltola, 1958, p. 24; Estermann, 1976, p. 181–182, 189. ** Both Närhi and Hopeasalmi describe the evolution of the Kalunga concept in a rather interesting manner. They claim that the Ovambo relationship with Kalunga had originally been closer and more personal than it was at the time of their writing. They further state that hundreds of years of heathenism had distorted people's personal and respectful relation with Kalunga, whose role in their religion had therefore become a secondary one. Their statements tell us very little about the original concept of Kalunga. Instead, this kind of description of Kalunga that maintains that "Africans originally had a more truthful concept of god but it has been distorted in the course of time" is probably similar to the descriptions given by other evangelical missionaries of other African gods. Gustav Werneck, for example, who was an influential evangelical mission theorist in the late 19th century, has written in the same way, claiming that heathens originally had some knowledge of god but it had been lost through centuries of heathenism (see Teinonen, 1959, p. 172, 189).

257 Aarni has various examples of how diffuse the concept of Kalunga was. Some people thought that Kalunga lived in heaven, others that he had a subterranean residence, and yet others that he was everywhere. Some sources claim that Kalunga was an invisible power, and others that he was an anthropomorphous being, either a man or a woman. Some describe Kalunga as being remote, while others state that Kalunga affects people's lives. See Aarni, 1982, p. 125–130.

258 Aarni, 1982, p. 95–96, 136–139.

259 Aarni, 1982, p. 95, 121, 135.

260 Aarni, 1982, p. 71, 107, 120–122, 127.

known, inexplicable or mystical. He was regarded as a last resort and helper in times of need. Kalunga was fate, in good as well as evil, but he was not a kind of cosmic totality, and he was usually thought of as an enormous person, a god and devil combined in Christian terms. She was also the ruler of the kingdom of death and was somehow linked with the ancestral spirits.[261] As a background force, Kalunga was usually distant, but he was not a pure-bred *Deus otiosus,* because it was believed that he could occasionally appear to a woman and make his will known. Finally, she was also said to be the cause of incurable diseases.[262]

The vagueness of the concept of Kalunga shows that he was not regarded as a central aspect of religion from the point of view of an ordinary person's everyday life.[263] More important were the spirits, which were basically of two kinds: ancestral spirits *aathithi* (sg. *omuthithi*)[264] and evil spirits *iiluli* (sg. *oshiluli*). Because the spirits were considered important to the living, the duality of the spiritual world was reflected, in one way or another, in practically all aspects of religious beliefs and practices, the main aim of the latter being to try to gain the favour of the good spirits and to protect oneself against the evil ones.

When an Ovambo died, he or she did not die socially but was in fact promoted to a higher status within the clan. The dead became *aathithi*, who were considered to be above the living elders. The relationship between the *aathithi* and the living was based on a reciprocal *do ut des* -principle. The continual existence of an *omuthithi* was dependent on whether he or she was remembered and respected by living relatives. If due respect was shown to *aathithi*, they would protect and help their living relatives, e.g. by acting as mediators between them and Kalunga.[265] The usual way of showing respect for ancestral spirits was through offerings, spitting being the smallest and most recurrent one. Another recurrent offering was a small portion of food set aside before each meal. The offering of food was particularly important when the first meal made from the new grain was eaten, because in that way the living showed due gratitude to the spirits for the crop. Offerings to ancestral spirits were also made when extra protection was needed, e.g. when moving a homestead to a new location.[266] *Aathithi* could become malevolent if the living failed to show due respect for them, and in such cases they could harm the living

261 ELC no. 434, p. 866–868 & no. 593, p. 1058–1059 & no. 789, p. 1204–1205; Aarni, 1982, p. 66, 93, 96–97, 120–123, 126, 129, 131, 143; Salokoski, 1992, p. 195, 203, 221, 223–228.

262 ELC no. 593, p. 1058–1059 & no. 789, p. 1204–1205 & no. 1364, p. 1923 & no. 1406, p. 1968; Rautanen, 1904, p. 14–17; Aarni, 1982, p. 127–128, 130, 143; Salokoski, 1992, p. 194, 219, 222. See also Loeb, 1948, p. 22.

263 The unimportance of the role of Kalunga is also reflected in Liljeblad's collection. Only fifteen narratives out of 1430 have Kalunga as the main theme.

264 In his dissertation, Teddy Aarni divides the ancestral spirits into two categories: the living dead and ancestors (i.e. *aathithi*). The living dead included those dead relatives, usually up to the fourth generation back, whose names were still remembered. When their names had been forgotten, they became nameless aathithi. (Aarni, 1982, p. 15–16) For the sake of clarity, and because the Ovambo themselves did not make such a distinction, I refer here only to one category of ancestral spirits.

265 ELC no. 1160, p. 1636; Aarni, 1982, p. 43, 61–64, 138–139; Salokoski, 1992, p. 208–209, 211, 221; Hiltunen, 1993, p. 35–36.

266 Hiltunen, 1993, p. 36, 105, 107–109, 154, 159, 165, 168.

by destroying a crop or causing sickness, for example. Should this happen, the living had to appease the spirits with sacrifices, which usually meant slaughtering a cow or a smaller animal.[267]

The evil spirits also appear to have been ancestral spirits. According to Aarni, it was believed that the souls of witches became *iiluli* after death, as did the souls of people who were not buried according to the proper practices after death, i.e. murderers, women who died in childbirth, people who died of starvation and people who were believed to have died as a consequence of bewitchment.[268] Herman Tönjes seem to have a different explanation for the origins of evil spirits. According to him, the Kwanyama believed that there were four kinds of spirits, of which one type in particular, the *ounikifa*, were feared by people because they tried to chase the living. Tönjes notes that these *ounikifa* were believed to be the souls of people whom healers had made immune to any harm when they had been alive.[269] As far as the doings of evil spirits are concerned, the information is rather scanty. It may be sufficient to say that they were definitely feared, that they seemed to be connected with witches and that they were most active during the night.

Coping with the spirits was obviously rather difficult, because the living had to avoid angering them. The other main way of keeping them satisfied, alongside offerings, was the strict observance of a myriad of taboos (*oshidhila,* pl. *iidhila*). The most important taboos were prohibitions which dealt with the correct behaviour towards sacred places and objects, or prohibitions that had to do with the sequentiality of the production year. For example, it was forbidden to enter a holy place with sandals on, and it was forbidden to fetch salt from Etosha before harvest time. Infringement of any of the major taboos was believed to bring the wrath of spirits against the whole community, and therefore they were punished accordingly, usually with death or by raiding the offender's property.[270] The king's person and actions were subject to many taboos; the best known probably being the fact that the ruling king was not allowed to leave his community area.[271] There were also taboos which were considered important for the well-being or good fortune of an individual or family, a few examples of which may be sufficient: It was forbid-

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267 ELC no. 69, p. 169 & no, 210, p. 470, 472 & no. 226, p. 519; Hiltunen, 1993, p. 53, 109

268 Aarni, 1982, p. 17. Aarni does not mention any source for his list of persons who were believed to become *iiluli*, and it can scarcely be thought to be correct, because it is difficult to understand how people who were believed to have died because of bewitchment could become evil spirits. This disbelief is based on two things. Firstly, dying on account of witchcraft was not believed to be at all unusual, so that if such people became *iiluli* after death, the number of evil spirits would have been unbearably great. Secondly, although Aarni claims that people who were not buried became *iiluli*, there seems to be no narrative in Liljeblad's collection to confirm that bewitched people were not buried, but there are four narratives (all from Uukwanyama) which clearly indicate that they were buried normally (ELC no. 779, p. 1185 & no. 1136, p. 1617–1618 & no. 1147, p. 1629 & no. 1413, p. 1980–1981), as were also women who died in childbirth (ELC no. 71, p. 176). Thus, if we assume that the souls of people who were not buried were believed to become evil spirits, the list of iiluli-to-be should probably exclude people who were believed to have died because of witchcraft and those who died in childbirth. Or to put it differently, Aarni is exaggerating the number of evil spirits which were believed to exist.

269 Tönjes, 1911, p. 194–196.

270 Salokoski, 1992, p. 358–359.

271 E.g. Hopeasalmi, 1946, p. 58.

den to look at another person over one's arm [that is, holding one's hand to one's face] because that presaged weeping for death, one was not allowed to eat with the left hand, because that caused danger to the eater's parents, it was forbidden for a Kolonkadhi man to marry a Mbalantu woman, because she would bring witchcraft with her, and leaving a full water vessel in the corridor of a homestead meant that the head of the family would soon die.[272]

Another aspect of coping with the spirits was people's desire to know in advance what the spirits were up to. This meant that the observation of innumerable omens was an important part of religious practice.[273] Many omens were seen in the behaviour or appearance of animals. Seeing a frog during the dry season meant death, if an elephant, lion or a ground hornbill [a black bird] was seen inside an inhabited area, the king or some other prominent member of the community would soon die, and a bull churning up the soil in the kraal with his horns foretold the death of the head of the homestead. On the other hand, if a hyena came to the entrance of the homestead during the night, the head was about to acquire more cattle.[274] There were also a couple of important omens connected with childbirth. Giving birth to twins was a very bad omen, because it was believed to bring illness and death both to the family and to the whole community. Twins were also a taboo, something that should not have existed and something people avoided speaking about, and whenever twins were born, they and their mother had to be purified in a special rite in order to avoid any misfortune. Children who were born feet first were also a bad omen and taboo, but not quite as bad as twins.[275]

In the same way as the spiritual world was basically divided between good and evil, people who had closer than normal contacts with the spirits were also divided, some used their contacts for good and some for evil. Those who produced socially unacceptable, evil results were either witches (*omulodhi,* pl. *aalodhi*) or sorcerers (*omutikili*, pl. *aatikili*), while those whose magic was mainly considered acceptable were healers or diviners (*onganga*, pl. *oonganga*).[276]

Witches were feared because they were believed to be the most important source of sickness and death, although not the only one.[277] *Aalodhi* were believed

272 ELC no. 152, p. 395–396 & no. 1107, p. 1558, 1560; Hopeasalmi, 1946, p. 59.

273 Cf. Aarni, 1982, p. 49.

274 ELC no. 76, p. 187–188; Tönjes, 1911, p. 203–209; Savola, 1916, p. 186.

275 Hiltunen, 1993, p. 201–216.

276 The missionaries did not use such an elaborate distinction in their documents. They usually referred to all groups simply as witches.

277 The question of the extent to which witches were believed to be the source of sickness and death is a rather interesting one, because there is no clear answer. Researchers tend to claim that witchcraft was seen as the main reason (e.g. Salokoski, 1992, p. 215), while according to Aarni (1982, p. 70), only those who had become too sick or old were believed to have died of "natural causes" while most deaths were seen to have been caused by witches. Loeb (quoted by Hiltunen, 1986, p. 41), on the other hand, writes about the Kwanyama, who believed that all deaths (with the exception of those caused by murder, starvation or war) were caused by witches. Yet another variation is given by the explorer Hans Schinz (1891, p. 314), who claims that the Ndonga believed that sicknesses in poor people was caused by angered ancestral spirits while witches were the cause of sickness among the rich. Schinz's finding is indirectly confirmed by Rautanen (Rautanen, Martti, Mitä on

to be in possession of special spiritual powers to do evil while they were asleep. Most (but not all) of them were women, and a capability for witchcraft was believed to run in the family; so that if a mother had been found guilty of witchcraft, it was probable that her daughter might face the same fate some time later. Witches' ability to do harm was limited, however, because it was believed that they could normally harm only members of their own kin or people whom they knew personally.[278] What is interesting in the case of Ovambo witchcraft is that the witches were not necessarily active evil-doers, but some of them were believed to be mere tools in the hands of evil spirits. In other words, a person could be a witch without knowing it herself. But it was also believed that nobody could become an involuntary medium for evil spirits unless she bore some personal grudge or ill will against the person who was supposed to have been bewitched.[279] It was probably this belief which was seen as a justification when a person believed to have killed somebody by witchcraft was sentenced to death by the king[280].

Sorcerers, too, were believed to be a cause of many unfortunate things, including deaths, accidents, childlessness, twins etc. What made *aatikili* different from *aalodhi* was the conscious and commercial activity of the sorcerers. They were, as Hiltunen puts it, day-witches[281]. They were usually men who had acquired a destructive magical power to set malicious spirits onto other people by means of rituals, medicines or spells. They were always fully aware of their acts and did not work as involuntary tools of evil spirits. *Aatikili* could use their talents to cause harm to their personal enemies, but more commonly they sold curses to anybody who wanted to harm somebody else and was able to pay for this. Sorcerers were thus mediums of revenge. If something had been stolen, for example, and the

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Suomen pakanalähetysseura saanut aikaan 30 vuoden vaikutusajallaan Ambomaalla ja erityisesti Ondongassa? [manuscript], 1902, p. 46. HpXXVIII:4, AFMS, NAF). On the other hand, one of Liljeblad's Kwanyama informants told him that sickness was normally believed to have been caused by spirits, but if sacrifices to them did not cure the patient, it was thought that the illness had been caused by a witch (ELC no. 794, p. 1207). ** According to Tönjes (1911, p. 214–215), the Kwanyama believed that all deaths were caused by witches, but his claim is somewhat illogical, for we know that killing somebody by witchcraft was normally punishable with death. The two ideas taken together would then imply that for every death there had to be one capital punishment, which, if followed rigorously, would soon have given rise to serious social tensions and would have led to depopulation in the long term. But Tönjes also has some information which might make his view more understandable. He writes (1911, p. 215) that earlier, during the rule of Haimbili [ca. 1811–1858], the belief in witches was not as prominent, and that only the deaths of wealthy and prominent persons were seen as having been caused by aalodhi. Loeb (quoted by Hiltunen, 1986, p. 30) also refers to local informants as saying that witch-hunts began only after Haimbili's reign. Furthermore, one of Liljeblad's Kwanyama informants, Gottlieb Hangula, stated that people did not believe in witches before the time of King Namadi [1882–1884] (ELC no. 296, p. 707–708). Thus we can assume that, at least in Uukwanyama, the belief in witches was not equally strong throughout, and that there appears to have been an upswing in witchcraft in the late 19th century. But one question still remains unsolved: Was it a genuine belief in witches as a source of death and sickness which increased, or was such a belief just manifested more widely and more often because accusations of witchcraft were needed socially for some reason at that time of uncertainty? I would favour the latter alternative.

278 Hiltunen, 1986, p. 21, 42–43, 46, 61–64, 66; Salokoski, 1992, p. 215, 372.

279 Hiltunen, 1986, p. 21, 45–46; Salokoski, 1992, p. 215–216.

280 E.g. Tönjes,1911, p.213–214; Hiltunen,1986, p.88–95; Salokoski, 1992, p. 372.

281 Hiltunen, 1986, p. 105.

thief's identity was not known, somebody could go to an *omutikili* and ask him to curse the thief. Similarly, if somebody had recently lost several members of his family, he could go to a sorcerer to have a curse placed on the witch who was responsible. Curses could also be bought for social purposes, e.g. when a junior member of a kin group had shown disrespect towards a senior member, the latter might ask an *omutikili* to punish him with a curse.[282]

The *aatikili* were feared, and sorcery was something which might be described as illegal, but that is just one side of the coin. The other side is, as Hiltunen has pointed out, that sorcery and curses apparently had a role in upholding and enforcing moral law and order in Ovambo society.[283] Take the curse on a thief, for example; a potential thief would probably think twice before committing such a crime if he believed that even if he managed to escape earthly punishment, he was still in danger of being cursed because of his deed. In the same way the belief that a disrespectful junior member of a kin group might be cursed was a way of maintaining the established social order. In fact, the belief in witchcraft may also have had similar, socially beneficial, effects: You should not do to others anything which might embitter them and make them bewitch you. If some forms of sorcery were *de facto* acceptable as a means of maintaining organized society, as indeed they seem to have been, that would explain why there is relatively little information about how sorcerers were punished[284].

Even though there is not much information about punishments for sorcery, it is still known that sorcerers, like witches, were executed in some cases.[285] It is not known how many people lost their lives for this reason, as only vague figures are available. The mission doctor Selma Rainio mentioned hearing from her patients that some two witches were executed every day in Uukwamyama[286] [i.e. some 750 per annum], while the missionary Estermann claims that in the late 19th century the figure was over a thousand a year[287]. These figures must be either exaggerated or refer to some unusually high peak year, for a community numbering something between 20,000 and 80,000 inhabitants in the 1890s[288], would probably have run into social and demographic problems if one to five per cent of the population had been executed annually.

Whatever the number of witches executed in the late 19th century may have been, the number began to decrease at the beginning of the next century, and belief in witches began to weaken. Witches were nevertheless still being put to death in the early 1910s, at least in Uukwambi and Ongandjera, although Ondonga had hardly had any witches publicly charged or executed for almost a decade by then.[289] When the South Africans established their administration in Ovamboland

282 Hiltunen, 1986, p. 21–22, 105–126.
283 Hiltunen, 1986, p. 104, 126.
284 Hiltunen, 1986, p. 136.
285 Hiltunen, 1986, p. 136.
286 Hiltunen, 1986, p. 31.
287 Estermann, 1976, p. 203.
288 Siiskonen, 1990, table 1, p. 42.
289 K. Koivu to J. Mustakallio 2 Feb. –13 Feb. 1910 & H. Saari to J. Mustakallio 16 May 1910, Eac16, AFMS, NAF; E. Lehto to J. Mustakallio 18 June 1912, Eac17, AFMS, NAF; Hiltunen, 1986, p. 31. **

in 1915, they soon took action to suppress accusations of witchcraft. These were forbidden, as also was the use of capital punishment by the kings.[290] Government action seems to have brought at least the open executions of witches to an end,[291] but what it did not end was the belief in witches, which remained prevalent even among some Christians[292], nor did it bring the accusations of witchcraft to an end, as these still occurred in the 1920s particularly in Uukwambi[293]. Either because of what happened in Uukwambi, or for some other reason, the colonial government passed a law in 1933 which made both accusations of witchcraft and black magic illegal[294].

Beliefs in witches, sorcerers and evil spirits obviously faded in the course of the twentieth century, but most people still felt at the end of the previous century that they were surrounded by many evil forces. There was a need for protection against such forces, and therefore all the people wore or carried amulets of various kinds.[295] But even amulets could fail to work and something unfortunate could happen; individuals had accidents, fell ill and died. If the people's own methods of restoring the situation to normal failed, it was time to call for an *onganga*[296], i.e. a healer.

When an *onganga* had been called to heal a sick person, his or her first task was to find out whether the sickness had been caused by spirits or by a witch. The *onganga* performed a ritual designed to detect magic, and if he came to a conclusion that the illness had been caused by spirits, he then inquired about what kind

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The absence of accusations of witchcraft in Ondonga can be explained, at least partly, by the kings' attitude towards witchcraft. Both King Kambonde kaNgula (1909–1912) and his successor Martin (1912–1942) made it publicly known that they did not believe in witches. They also forbade the use of sorcerers. (See J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 10 Nov. 1911, Eac16; A. Pettinen to J. Mustakallio 25 Jan. 1913, Eac18; Martti Rautanen, Harvinaisen asian selvittely, 10 May 1914, Eac19. All in AFMS, NAF.)

290 Resident Commisioner Ovamboland urgent report to the Secretary for SWA no. 9/1917/24, 15 Jan. 1917, p. 2, RCO (9), NAN; Hayes, 1992, p. 242–243; McKittrick, 1995, p. 91.

291 The last mention of witch being executed to be found in the missionaries' letters was a reference to a man killed in Uukwambi in 1918. It is still possible that witches were killed secretly by poisoning even after that, however, as the missionary Väänänen later suspected, although without any actual evidence. Judging from the missionary documents, the normal punishment for witchcraft in the 1920s was confiscation of property and exile. (See S. and A. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 14 Aug. 1918, Eac21; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 15 July 1929, Eac29; O. Tylväs Annual Report 1922 (Elim), mmm10–11 Jan. 1923, Appendix 11, Hha8; Wäänänen, Nestori, Hän tarvitsee parhaimman uskonnon (manuscript) s.d. p. 15, HpXXXIX:1. All in AFMS, NAF. Copy O. Tylväs to Resident Commissioner Ovamboland 3 Aug. 1922, Eaj, AELCIN.)

292 E.g. V. Alho, Seurakuntatarkastus Oshitajissa 5–6.11.1932 [parish inspection report], Daac, AELCIN; V. Alho, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista länsiheimoissa ja Uukwanyamassa 2–13 Aug. and 23–27 Aug. 1930 [parish inspection in western tribes and Uukwanyama], Eac30, AFMS, NAF; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 14 Aug. 1918, Eac21, AFMS, NAF; O.E. Närhi's Annual Report 1927 (Oshigambo/Oshitaji), mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendix 19, Hha10, AFMS, NAF; Wäänänen, Nestori, The customs of Ovambos, 30 Dec. 1926, 2/35, A450, NAN.

293 E.g. O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 15 July 1929, Eac29; O. Aho to the Board of Directors of FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1922 (Elim), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1923, Appendix 11, Hha8; O. Aho's Annual Report 1929 (Elim), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 44, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF.

294 Witchcraft Suppression Proclamation 27/1933 (SWA Official Gazette no. 538/1933).

295 Ovambo amulets are described by Lebzelter, 1934, p. 250–251, Hopeasalmi, 1946, p. 62–65 and Hiltunen, 1993, p. 142–145, 193–199, 216–217, for example.

296 There are actually two words for a healer/diviner. *Onganga* is the standard healer, while *ompule* or *ompulile* (pl. *oompule* or *oompulile*) is a more powerful one. For the sake of clarity the word *onganga* is used here for all healers.

of sacrifice the spirits wanted for leaving the patient. Alternatively, or complementarily to this, the *onganga* could try to cure the patient by exorcising the spirits or by using herbs.[297] If he had found out that the sickness had been caused by a witch, or if he had been asked to find the person who had killed somebody by witchcraft, the *onganga* would again resort to magic to find out who the witch was. When he had found the person whom he believed to be the witch, he revealed the name to the relatives of the patient or the deceased, who would often ask for an opinion from a second or even third *onganga* before taking the case to the king.[298]

Finding witches was an important task of the *oonganga*, and with the benefit of hindsight it can be said that it also was the most controversial aspect of their activities.[299] But witch-finding and healing were only part of what the *oonganga* did, because they also had various tasks in the fields of productive, protective, preventive and purifying magic. A person would consult an *onganga,* for example, when he or she wanted to become rich or loved by using magic. A healer's magic was also needed when a new king ascended the throne and wanted to strengthen his authority and rule.[300] When unusually bad omens occurred, such as an elephant traversing an inhabited area or the birth of twins, an *onganga* was called to conduct purifying rites that would prevent the misfortune from happening. A healer could also be present in situations where the danger of being attacked by evil spirits or witches was greater than normal, e.g. when a homestead was being moved. *Oonganga* were also responsible for recharging amulets which had lost their power,[301] and the list could be continued almost indefinitely.

Before one could become an *onganga* one had to be initiated into the profession by older *oonganga*. At least in some cases a long apprenticeship was also required before initiation. The question of who was actually qualified to become an *onganga* is somewhat obscure. On the one hand, there is information to suggest that the person had to be possessed by spirits, but on the other hand, some information would indicate that the older *oonganga* decided who could be trained to take up the profession.[302] It may well have been, as one of Loeb's informants recounted, that anybody could become a healer of the lowest grade, i.e. one who used only herbal medicine, but that higher diviners had to be possessed by ances-

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297 E.g. ELC no. 69, p. 169 & no. 197, p. 436 & no. 210, p. 470–472 & no. 226, p. 519–524 & no. 656, p. 1103 & no. 1079, p. 1486–1487 & no. 1233, p. 1728. About herbs which were used against different diseases, see ELC no. 519, p. 1003.

298 E.g. Tönjes, 1911, p. 210–214; Hiltunen, 1986, p. 70–84. I have omitted here the description of the methods which *oonganga* used to detect witches, because detailed descriptions can be found in the books by Tönjes and Hiltunen, for example.

299 As noted earlier, Finnish missionaries tended to describe the *oonganga* in rather disparaging terms, as swindlers who made their living at the cost of those people who were killed as witches. But they were trusted and honoured in their own communities because they were seen to be fighting against evil forces (Hiltunen, 1986, p. 84). Even today the social role of the *oonganga* as doctors and helpers is appreciated even by many Christians (Aarni, 1982, p. 17, 48; Nampala, 2000, p.14). Furthermore, not all missionaries had quite as pejorative a view of the *oonganga* as the Finns had. Roman Catholic missionary Estermann, for example, stated in the 1930s that the great majority of the healers worked "absolument de bonne foi" (quoted by Houghton, 1965, p. 7).

300 Hiltunen, 1993, p. 115–119, 128–131, 137–139.

301 Hiltunen, 1993, p. 136, 142–143, 149, 158, 201–215.

302 Hiltunen, 1993, p. 39–53.

tral spirits.[303] Whatever the qualifications may have been, the interesting thing with the *oonganga* is that many of them appear to have been gays. As Loeb stated, this was not true of all the healers in Uukwanyama, but most male homosexuals were healers. Also, according to one of his informants, a certain type of healer had to have had homosexual experiences.[304] Probably becoming a healer was an acceptable way of being gay among the Ovambo, because homosexual healers also existed in other communities than just Uukwanyama[305] .

If we now try to summarize the Ovambo religion, the first point to note is the two levels of spiritual beings. There was *Kalunga*, god or the ultimate force, who was mostly distant but was responsible for anything that was totally unexplainable. Then there were spirits, which were closer to the living than *Kalunga*. These were either mostly benevolent ancestral spirits or malevolent evil spirits. This good-evil –dichotomy in the spiritual world was reflected in people's daily religious life, which concentrated on securing the aid of good spirits and protecting oneself against the evil ones. The same dichotomy is also seen amongst those people who were more closely connected with the spirits than ordinary people: there were the witches and sorcerers who harmed others with the help of, or because of, the spirits, and then there were the healers or diviners who were seen as the counterforce. Yet good and evil were not always clearly set apart from each other, for normally benevolent ancestral spirits could become malevolent if the living did not show them proper respect. Similarly, healers could sometimes also work as sorcerers and sell curses, for example.

Contacts with Europeans

The coming of the Europeans to Ovamboland took place in the normal order: first came the Bottle, then the Bible and finally the Bullet. The consequences of the coming of the Bottle (traders) have been described earlier and therefore the rest of this chapter will deal with the remaining two B's.

Arrival of the missionaries and an outline of their activities

The first missionaries to enter Ovamboland were Herren Hugo Hahn and Johannes Rath of the Rhenish Mission Society, who arrived in Ondonga together with the English hunter Frederick Green in July 1857. The aim of their journey was to survey the possibilities for making Ovamboland a new mission field for the RMS,

303 Hiltunen, 1993, p. 48–49.

304 Hiltunen, 1993, p. 49–50. In another context Loeb states that all medicine men were classified as homosexuals, as they actually were if they had been initiated (see Loeb, 1962, p. 82).

305 ELC no. 280, p. 674, 680 & no. 438, p. 884 & no. 1400, p. 1958–1960 & no. 1401, p. 1962; Närhi, 1929, p.76–78; Hiltunen, 1993, p. 55–56 (translation of ELC no. 1400); Amupolo, 1997, p. 15.

which had been working fruitlessly among the Herero for over a decade.[306] They were unable to fulfil their task, however, because their stay in Ovamboland was cut short. A couple of days after their arrival, they met King Nangolo dhAmutenya, who forbade them to continue their journey to other communities, thus knocking the bottom out of their survey mission. The missionaries therefore decided to return home. On the morning of 30th July their party was preparing for departure when it was suddenly surrounded by armed Ndonga warriors, and it was only after a brief battle, during which three men were killed, that the missionaries were able to flee the country.[307]

The reasons which made this first encounter between missionaries and the Ovambo a total failure, ending in shooting, can be summed up with words false expectations and arrogance. King Nangolo obviously had false expectations of the missionaries, because he asked them to join him in fighting against raiding neighbours.[308] It has also been suggested that Nangolo may have suspected the missionaries of spying for the Oorlam chief Jonker Afrikaner.[309] Furthermore, Hahn and Rath behaved on some occasions in a way which probably made them appear arrogant or hostile. They argued with the king's representative about the returning of gifts and refused to perform the rites which were required on entering the community area. They also refused to light their campfire with fire sent to them by the king, because they regarded the lighting ceremony as a heathen practice, in spite of being informed that refusal would be considered an unfriendly gesture.[310]

In the mid-1860s the Rhenish missionaries began receiving messages from the north stating that the Ovambo kings were willing to have missionaries in their countries, and therefore the RMS sent Hahn on a new mission to the north in 1866 to find out whether the prerequisites for starting mission work really existed.[311] Hahn's mission also had a secondary, political aim, in that he wanted to form an alliance between the Herero and the Ovambo, obviously against the Oorlam Afrikaners, with whom both the Herero and the missionaries were in conflict.[312] The alliance plans apparently failed, but otherwise Hahn's journey was a success. He was received in a friendly manner by both King Shikongo of Ondonga and Mweshipandeka of Uukwanyama, who asked him for missionaries. Hahn also met

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306 *Berichte der Rheinischen Missions-Gesellschaften* 6/1890, p. 175; Vedder, 1985, p. 368–369.

307 Hahn, Carl Hugo, *Tagebücher IV*, 1985, p. 1047–1064 (24–31 July 1857); *Reise der Herren Hugo Hahn und Rath in südwestlichen Afrika, Mai bis September 1857*, 1859, p. 302–303.

308 Hahn, *Tagebücher IV*, 1985, p. 1046 (23 July 1857).

309 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 100. Siiskonen bases his argument on Hahn's writings.

310 Hahn, *Tagebücher IV*, 1985, p. 1033 (18 July 1857), 1047–1049 (24 July 1857); Williams, 1991, p. 119–120. ** According to Rautanen (1904, p. 10), one reason why Nangolo was offended was because Hahn and Rath unknowingly unharnessed the oxen to their wagon under a holy tree. The same story has been re-told by Hopeasalmi (1946, p. 61), Peltola (1958, p. 27–28), Siiskonen (1990, p. 99) and Cooper (2001, p.40), but it is probably untrue, because Hahn writes in his diary that the place to unharness the oxen, under two trees, was shown to the missionaries by a person from the king's court (see Hahn, *Tagebücher IV*, 1985, p. 1047).

311 *Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867*, 1867, p. 284: *Berichte der Rheinischen Missions-Gesellschaften* 6/1890, p. 176.

312 *Neueste Deutsche...*, 1867, p. 284. On the background to Hahn's alliance plans, i.e. the political situation in Central Namibia in the 1860s, see Loth, 1963, p. 52-85; Vedder, 1985, p. 398-479; Lau, 1987, p. 119-141; Siiskonen, 2000, p. 348–354.

King Nuuyoma of Uukwambi.[313] After his journey he revealed his enthusiasm by making a reference to his earlier visit: "What a difference between now and 1857!"[314]

The door to Ovamboland was thus at least half-open. There was a slight problem, though; The RMS did not have enough resources to commence work in Ovamboland, because it had recently opened up new fields in India[315] . But Hahn had a solution. He had already established contacts in the early 1860s with the leaders of the newly (1859) founded Finnish Missionary Society and knew that the Finns were still looking for a place where they could work. Since the Finns were fellow Lutherans, Hahn wrote to Helsinki and asked if they would be willing to begin mission work in Ovamboland. The FMS agreed without much hesitation, and in 1868 the first graduates from the FMS mission school left for Barmen to complement their studies at the RMS headquarters.[316] In 1869–1870 they continued with practical training at the Otjimbingue mission station in Hereroland under Hahn's guidance, and finally, in July 1870, the first group of Finns, seven missionaries and two lay craftsmen, arrived in Ovamboland.[317]

At first everything went fine. The missionaries were warmly welcomed by several kings, and in 1870–1871 they were able to commence work in Ondonga, Uukwanyama, Uukwambi and Ongandjera. But a setback came in 1872, and the local kings expelled the missionaries from all the communities except Ondonga.[318] There were apparently plans for their expulsion from Ondonga, too,[319] but these were never put into effect. For the next thirty years the Finnish missionaries worked only in Ondonga, even though their relationship with the king even there was initially so strained that they were seriously considering withdrawal in the late 1870s[320] .

The reasons that led to the initial setback in mission work are in many respects the same as those which led to Hahn's and Rath's departure in 1857. The basic problem was that neither party, the Ovambo kings or the missionaries, really knew at first how the other party was accustomed to working and what its aims were. When the kings invited missionaries, they apparently wanted helpers with western skills, smiths to repair their guns and wizards of a new kind to win wars for them. In practice the missionaries were not much use as gunsmiths, and neither were they keen to play the role of wizards. Instead, they were anxious to make people their disciples. This was obviously a suspicious matter from the kings' point of view, particularly since the missionaries' teaching can be assumed to have included the idea of equality among all people in the world hereafter, which would have tended to undermine the kings' role as the heads of their communities. Further problems were caused by the fact that some of the missionaries lacked the diplomatic skills which would have been needed in dealings with autocratic kings. For

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313 *Neueste Deutsche*..., 1867, p. 289-294, 296.
314 *Neueste Deutsche*..., 1867, p. 296.
315 *Berichte der Rheinischen Missions-Gesellschaften* 6/1890, p. 176.
316 Remes, 1993, p. 11, 99, 120, 129–133; Oermann, 1999, p. 222.
317 Peltola, 1958, p. 35–40.
318 Peltola, 1958, p. 41–56; Weiss, 2000, p. 543–548; See also Dierks, 1999, p. 23–25.
319 Peltola, 1958, p. 56.
320 Miettinen, 2000, p. 451.

example, missionary Kurvinen, who worked in Uukwambi, was criticised even by some of his colleagues for being too keen to involve himself in the affairs of King Nuuyoma. Kurvinen's demands that the king should end raiding, and his criticism of Nuuyoma's trading with Europeans, were not only direct attacks on the king's economic policies, but they also made the traders hostile to the missionaries. Finally in Uukwambi, as in Uukwanyamama and Ongandjera, the king's initial disappointment and his growing suspicions led to deportation of the missionaries.[321]

The missionaries in Ondonga were able to establish bearable relations with the kings by the early 1880s even though occasional conflicts did occur even after that.[322] These conflicts were obviously one reason why Christianity did not spread among the people in the way the missionaries would have wished. The ordinary people's suspicions of the missionaries, and even fear of them,[323] also contributed to the slow spread of Christianity. Thus the first Ovambo were baptized only in 1883,[324] and by 1900 the group of a little over 800 Christians made up 2.5 to 5 percent of the Ondonga population.[325] Conversion to Christianity on a larger scale first began in Ovamboland in the 1920s, marking an upswing that was preceded by a territorial expansion in mission activity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Roman Catholic mission had made an unsuccessful attempt to commence work in Uukwanyama in the mid-1880s, but this community was brought under missionary influence in 1891, when the Rhenish Society established its first station there. After the deportation of the German missionaries from Ovamboland by the Portuguese and South African authorities in 1916, the work in Uukwanyama was taken over by the Finns in 1920,[326] but before that the FMS had (re)established permanent mission stations in Ongandjera (1903), Uukwambi (1908) and Uukwaluudhi (1909).[327] Work in Ombalantu began in the early 1920s, when missionaries stationed in Ongandjera began visiting the community, which then gained its first resident missionary in 1925.[328]

Although preaching was, at least initially, the means which missionaries considered to be most important for proselytizing among the people, they soon entered upon other activities aimed at supporting this, the two most important forms being school work and medical missions. Schools were needed to give the converts enough information about the religion that they could be baptised, and also to give them the skills which they needed when professing their new faith. Further-

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321 See McKittrick, 1995, p.120; Miettinen, 2000, p. 451; Weiss, 2000, p. 543–553.

322 Miettinen, 2000, p. 451–456.

323 It was initially believed, for example, that the missionaries were monsters who lived in anthills and ate human flesh (McKittrick, 2002, p. 91).

324 Peltola, 1958, p. 83.

325 Tilastotaulu Suomen Lähetysseuran työstä lähetysalueellaan Ambomaalla 1900, mmm 27.1.1901, Hha4, AFMS, NAF. Population estimates Siiskonen, 1990, table 1, p. 42.

326 Tönjes, 1911, p. 250–259; Peltola, 1958, p. 81, 122, 180–181, 195-198; Hayes, 1992, p. 80, 89, 221.

327 Peltola, 1958, p. 144–150.

328 E. Järvinen's Annual Report 1922 (Ongandjera/Ombalantu), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1923, Appendix 13, Hha8, AFMS, NAF; H. Saari's Annual Report 1925 (Ombalantu), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1926, Appendix 23, Hha9, AFMS, NAF.

more, schools were believed to be needed for deepening the faith and improving the morals of the Christians. The missionaries' medical work was not only a humanitarian activity, but it, too, had a role in christianization. Medical aid was believed to "tame the heathen", i.e. to increase people's trust in the missionaries and thus bring them to the Word.

Schooling had been started very soon after the missionaries had arrived, but on a very small scale at first, as the missionaries just taught the alphabet and told bible stories to their servants and foster children. Little by little the number of pupils grew, however, and in 1899 some 450 people were attending mission schools.[329] By this time the basic structure of these schools had emerged: There were "general schools" (elementary schools) which gave basic instruction to children and those who were preparing to be baptised, and then there were baptismal and confirmation classes which gave further instruction on religion to catechumens and candidates for confirmation. Subjects which were needed for Christian worship were predominant also in the elementary schools. Even though some missionaries gave instruction in writing and elementary arithmetic, most elementary schools only taught religion, reading and singing.[330] The idea of widening the curriculum by introducing the general teaching of writing arose in 1899. Although writing was on the curriculum of many elementary schools in the 1910s, religion, reading and singing were still the only subjects which had to be taught in all elementary schools in 1923.[331] Such a limited curriculum was maintained partly because not all Ovambo teachers were able to teach writing[332], and partly also because not all the missionaries accepted the teaching of secular subjects at mission schools[333].

By the beginning of the 1910s pupil enrolment in elementary schools had grown to some two thousand.[334] This increase had two consequences. Firstly, it created a need for more qualified Ovambo teachers, this leading in 1913 to the founding of the Oniipa training school for teachers, from which first students graduated in 1916 and the first woman teacher in 1928.[335] Secondly, there arose a need for more advanced education, since confirmation classes were no longer considered adequate as the highest form of education. This led to the founding of five

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329 Lehtonen, 1999, p. 18, 33.

330 Lehtonen, 1999, p. 15–16, 18, 25–26, 28.

331 N.Väänänen's Annual Report on school inspections 1923, mmm 8 Jan. 1924, Appendix 23, Hha8, AFMS, NAF; Lehtonen, 1999, p. 32. For examples of subjects taught at various elementary schools, see O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1910 (Oniipa) & K. Petäjä's Annual Report 1910 (Ontananga), mmm 17 Jan. 1911, Appendices 2 and 7; K. Koivu's Annual Report 1912 (Elim), mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendix 14; M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1915 (Olukonda), mmm 22 March 1916, Appendix 1. All in Hha6–7, AFMS, NAF.

332 E.g. Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1922 [Report on the tour of inspection to Ovamboland], p. 11. Lb, AELCIN; A. Hänninen to M. Tarkkanen 24 July 1923, Eac23, AFMS, NAF; N. Väänänen to M. Tarkkanen 30 May 1924, Eac24, AFMS, NAF.

333 These included, first of all, the presiding missionary Martti Rautanen, for whom the sole purpose of mission schools was to "lead people to the concregation of Christ". He denied being against "secular education" as such but considered it of minor importance, so that missionaries, as "ambassadors of Christ", should not waste their resources on it (see M. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 3 Sept. 1917, Eac2, AFMS, NAF).

334 Lehtonen, 1999, p. 40.

335 Lehtonen, 1999, p. 46 and Appendix 4b p. 173.

boys' and girls' schools before the Second World War. Girls' schools in Oshigambo and Engela were opened in 1924, Engela boys' school in 1926, Ongwediva Industrial School for boys in 1927 and Uukwaluudhi girls' school in 1939.[336]

After the Second World War, particularly in the 1950s, the number of post-elementary schools increased and the quality of education in the mission schools improved. In 1946, when a government syllabus was introduced for elementary schools[337] , most of them reached a level equivalent to sub-standard B, while some were on the Sdt. II-level. The boys' and girls' schools appear to have been on the Sdt. II or Sdt. III level.[338] At this time the highest education provided by the FMS schools was approximately equal to that which Africans could obtain at schools in the Police Zone.[339] In 1960, which was the last year before the gradual transfer of schools from the mission to the government began, the Ovambo-Kavango Church and the FMS had altogether 243 schools with 26,846 pupil as follows:

143 unregistered elementary schools (bush schools), with 8,676 pupils
82 registered elementary schools, with 17,370 pupils (Sub A to Sdt II)
9 girls' schools, with 421 pupils (Sdt. III–V or III–VI)
6 boys' schools, with 236 pupils (Sdt. III–V or III–VI)
2 teacher training schools, with 123 students (Sdt. V–VI)
1 secondary school (Oshigambo), with 20 students (Sdt. VI–VIII)[340]

336 R. Rautanen's Annual Report 1924 (General report on Ovambo mission) & A. Rautaheimo's Annual Report 1924 (Oshigambo) & S. Hirvonen's Annual Report 1924 (Engela), mmm 20–21. Jan. 1925, Appendices 2, 13 and 22, Hha9; V. Kivinen's Annual Report 1926 (Engela), mmm 13–14. Jan. 1927, Appendix 20, Hha9; K. Koivu's Annual Report 1927 (Ongwediva School), mmm 18–19. Jan. 1928, Appendix 30, Hha10; S. Aarni's Annual Report 1938 (Tsandi), mmm 22–23. Feb. 1939, unnumbered appendix, Hha17; H. Ranttila's Annual Report 1939 (Tsandi), mmm 10–11. Jan. 1940, Appendix 37, Hha18. All in AFMS, NAF.

337 H. Kupila's Annual Report 1946 (Elementary Schools), mmm 22–23. Jan. 1947, Appendix 11. Hha21, AFMS, NAF.

338 K. Himanen to U. Paunu 15 Feb. 1946, Eac41; L. Lindström to V. Alho 16 July 1947, Eac42; L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 19 Aug. 1947, Eac42; H. Kupila's Annual Report 1946 (Elementary Schools) & A. Mutanen's Annual Report 1946 (Ongwediva) & A. Ripatti's Annual Report 1946 (Oshigambo), mmm 22–23 Jan. 1947, Appendices 11, 23 and 30. Hha21; A. Mutanen's Annual Report 1947 (Ongediwa), mmm 8–9 Jan. 1948, Appendix 26. Hha21. All in AFMS, NAF. ** In the standard system each of the twelve years from the beginning of schooling up to the matriculation examination was marked as a standard. The first two years were sub-standards A and B, which together with Sdt's I–V constituted the primary school, while Sdt's VI–X were the secondary school. Reaching Sdt. III education thus normally took five years, although this did not apply to FMS schools. It still took pupils two years to complete one standard in Ovamboland schools in the latter half of the 1940s, because of the short school year (see B. Eriksson to U. Paunu 16 Sept. 1945, Eac41, AFMS, NAF; Cohen, 1994, p. 86).

339 The highest educational establishment of the FMS in the mid-1940s was the teacher training school. This had not been standardized yet, but it was approximately at the Sdt. III or Sdt. IV level and thus provided a few people with higher primary education. Sdt. III was also in practice the upper limit of African education in the Police Zone, according to the 1949 statistics, because only one per cent of African pupils were studying at standards IV to VI and none at standards VII to X (see Harlech-Jones, 1986, table 1, p. 29).

340 Figures as in Tilastotietoja SLS:n koulutoiminnasta Ambomaan lähetysalalla 1960 [Statistics on the FMS school work in Ovamboland], Hha32, AFMS, NAF. Standards as in Pöytäkirja kouluasioista neuvottelemaan kutsuttujen Hukan, Kyllösen, Lokan, Sorsan, Tirrosen ja Hatakan neuvotteluista Oshigambossa 26.3.1960, Aac, AELCIN; Minutes of the field administration board

"Pictures from Ovamboland. A lesson in an out-station school." This picture was originally published as one in a series of postcards which made various aspects of the missionary work known to Finns back home. "Bush schools" like this enabled many non-Christians to learn the rudiments of reading and Christian dogma which they had to grasp before they could be baptized. (Photo by courtesy of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission)

The development of the missionaries' medical work followed the same pattern as that of the school work, in the sense that it was originally on a small-scale but later expanded considerably. At first it was the missionaries, or their wives, who tended the sick without any medical training and using whatever medicines they happened to have. Although healing the sick did not belong to their commission in the strictest sense, it still was beneficial from the missionaries' point of view, because it brought considerable numbers of people into first-hand contact with them. The medical contribution also helped them to maintain workable relations with the kings of Ondonga.[341]

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8 Feb. 1962, Nba4, AELCIN; E. Hatakka's Annual Report 1960 (Ongwediva teacher training school) & E. Lokka's Annual Report 1960 (Ongandjera teacher training school) & T.E. Tirronen's Annual Report 1960 (Oshigambo secondary school), mmm 17–19. Jan. 1961, Appendices 15, 16 and 17, Hha32, AFMS, NAF; Lehtonen, 1999, Appendix 9, p. 197. (NB. The standards for the boys' and girls' schools are only approximate, because these schools were in a state of considerable transformation in 1960.)

341 Peltola, 1958, p. 77, 161; Syrjä, 1963, p. 26–27, 31, 33–35; Miettinen, 2000, p. 452.

Considerable improvement in the mission's medical work took place in 1908, when the first medical professional, Dr. Selma Rainio, arrived in Ovamboland. When she was joined by two nurses in 1911, it was possible to open the first hospital in Onandjokwe. In its first full year of operation this served 361 in-patients and 5,826 at its out-patient clinic. When Rainio handed over the hospital to her successor, Dr. Anni Melander, in 1933, Onandjokwe was a complex with 17 buildings and 49 huts for patients and their relatives to stay in and the numbers of patients treated were 600 in-patients and 7,452 out-patients. Rainio returned to Ovamboland in 1936, and since the FMS now had two doctors in the field, went to Engela Hospital, which had been founded in as a clinic in 1922, and had since then been run by a Finnish nurse.[342]

More staff and more money were needed for the further development of the medical service, more than the FMS headquarters could possibly provide. In order to improve the staff situation, the mission began training Ovambo nurses in 1934.[343] As far as finances were concerned, help was given by the South West African administration, which began subsidizing medical work with aid grants in 1923.[344] Government grants, which consisted of basic annual grants, special grants for the treatment of Tb-patients and free drugs, made a considerable contribution to the work. In 1935, for example, the total value of government grants was £1,166 while the FMS headquarters was only able to send £135 for general medical work (excluding medical staff salaries). Similarly, government grants in 1954 covered 66 per cent of the costs of the medical work (including some of the salaries), patient fees 30 per cent and the rest came from the FMS.[345] All in all, with the help of Ovambo nurses and government grants, the FMS was able to establish a network of medical services which in 1960 consisted of eight institutions defined as hospitals, 12 clinics and four maternity clinics. The network was run by two Finnish doctors, one pharmacist and 16 Finnish and 41 Ovambo nurses. The number of in-patients treated at wards was 10,820, while 233,395 out-patients were helped at the clinics.[346]

When we speak of the medical missions of the FMS, the emphasis is on the latter word, as medical work was for the missionaries first and foremost a means of advancing the spread of Christianity. This seems to have been a common approach among all Lutheran missions, and was based, at least in part, on the ideas of the in-

342 S. Rainio's Annual Report 1912 (Onandjokwe hospital), mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendix 5, Hha6; A. Hänninen's Annual Report 1922 (Engela), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1923, Appendix 20, Hha8; L. Helenius' Annual Report 1924 (Engela hospital), mmm 20–21 Jan. 1925, Appendix 23, Hha9; A. Melander's Annual Report 1933 (Onandjokwe hospital), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1934, Appendix 7, Hha12. All in AFMS, NAF; Peltola, 1958, p. 155, 162, 198, 263–264, 267; Syrjä, 1963, p. 41–49.

343 E.g. A. Melander's Annual Report 1934 (Onandjokwe hospital), mmm 9–10. Jan. 1935, Appendix 10, Hha13, AFMS, NAF.

344 S. Rainio to M. Tarkkanen 31 Oct. 1922, 13 March 1923, 25 Aug. 1923, Eac23, AFMS, NAF.

345 A. Melander's Annual Report 1935 (Onandjokwe hospital), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 14, Hha14, AFMS, NAF; I. Saloheimo's Annual Report 1954 (Onadjokwe hospital), mmm 19–20 Jan. 1955, Appendix 4, Hha26, AFMS, NAF; Syrjä, 1963, p. 74.

346 Tilastotietoja SLS:n sairaanhoitotyöstä Ambomaan lähetysalalla 1960 [Statistics on the FMS medical work in Ovamboland], Hha32, AFMS, NAF.

fluential theorist Gustav Warneck, who strongly emphasised the role of proselytism in missionizing and regarded auxiliary activities, such as schooling and medical missions, to be valuable only if they directly helped proselytism.[347] Similar views were also expressed by the Finns. Whenever they felt a need to defend the necessity of medical work, for example, they seldom referred to the humanitarian aspect, but instead emphasised how important it was for proselytism; It was a means of attracting people into contact with the missionaries and of bringing them under the influence of the Word. It was assumed to make people trust the missionaries and show them what Christian love meant in practice, and therefore to make the new religion appear more attractive.[348] As the missionary Onni Aho put it:

> "I have heard opinions that we should give up medical work, as well as all manual work, and concentrate on preaching the Word. What worth would our babble be if we did not help those who are really suffering, who are dying; if we really did not show our faith in our actions? Or should we leave the care of their bodies to the Catholics, who have several nurses here? They would take people's souls too."[349]

That medical work was basically a means of proselytism can also be seen in some details of the medical service. From the beginning, Onandjokwe Hospital had two evangelists who discussed religious matters with patients.[350] Prayer meetings were held at the hospital every evening, and if a patient who was considered fit enough did not want to participate in these, he was moved to one of the huts nearest to the church so that he could not avoid hearing the sermons.[351] The subsidiary role of medical work also occasionally became evident when the placement of medical staff was discussed. When the missionary August Hänninen appealed to the board of directors in 1935 to send a Finnish nurse to Eenhana in eastern Uukwanyama, for example, he claimed that the local people would be lost to the Anglicans if there was no nurse there.[352] Similarly in Uuwambi, the presence of a Finnish nurse

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347 Syrjä, 1963, p. 108–109. On Warneck's views concerning the means of proselytism, see Teinonen, 1959, p. 197–203. On the theoretical and practical role of medical missions in the work of the Norwegian missionaries in Zululand, see Simensen & Gynnild, 1986, p. 40 and Simensen & Børhaug & Hernæs & Sønstabø, 1986, p. 203–205, 236–237.

348 E.g. H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 28 June 1926, Eac26; S. Rainio to M. Tarkkanen 6 July 1931, Eac30; A. Soini to U. Paunu 23 Oct. 1938, Eac38; V. Alho to U. Paunu 11 April 1939, Eac39; L. Helenius to T. Vapaavuori 21 July 1947, Eac42; A. Mutanen to T. Vapaavuori 7 Aug. 1947, Eac42; S. Rainio's Annual Report 1931 (Onandjokwe hospital), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 13, Hha11; O. Aho's Annual Report 1933 (Tsandi), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1934, Appendix 28, Hha12; J. Hopeasalmi's Annual Report 1936 (Okahao), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1937, Appendix 18, Hha15; Pöytäkirja sairaanhoitoa suunnittelevan komitean kokouksesta 28.3.1960 [minute of the medical work planning committee] §4 and Appendix 1, Hha31. All in AFMS, NAF; See also Syrjä, 1963, p. 107–111.

349 O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 2 March 1929, Eac29, AFMS, NAF. (Transl. KM)

350 S. Rainio's Annual Report 1911 (Onandjokwe hospital), mmm 18 Jan. 1912, Appendix 3, Hha6, AFMS, NAF.

351 A. Soini's Annual Report 1939 (Onandjokwe hospital), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1940, Appendix 12, Hha18, AFMS, NAF.

352 A. Hänninen to the Board of Directors of the FMS 12 Feb. 1935, Eac36, AFMS, NAF.

was seen as a means of keeping people from falling into contact with the Roman Catholic mission working there.[353]

The above references to Anglican and Roman Catholic missions are due to the fact that in 1924 the South West African administration ended the Lutheran monopoly of proselytism by allowing the Anglican Damaraland Mission and the Catholic *Oblaten der Unbeflekten Jungfrau Maria* to commence work in Ovamboland. Under this government decision, the Anglicans were allowed to work in Uukwanyama and the Catholics in Uukwambi and Ongandjera, while the FMS was free to work in all the other communities and to maintain its congregations and facilities in the above communities but not to expand its work there.[354] Kati Kemppainen, having studied the Finns' relationships with other denominations in SWA, points out that the administration appears to have been reluctant to open Ovamboland to a number denominations, and suggests that it may have been forced to do so.[355] She may be right, for the administration had still turned down a RC application for permission to work in the north in 1920, but then, according to the Administrator of SWA, the pressure from the Anglican and Catholic missions became so strong that Ovamboland had to be opened up to them as well.[356] That is not the whole truth, however. The administrators were not happy with the Finns, whom they regarded as being too reluctant to encourage Ovambo men to migrate south in search of work, and whose educational input they deemed to be of little use in making these men better workers.[357] Therefore, new denominations were allowed into Ovamboland provided that they promised to promote labour migration and the bulk of their educational work was of a practical nature.[358]

Finns were furious about the decision to allow other denominations into Ovamboland.[359] They had fought against it and once it had happened, they did everything they could to have it revoked. Not only did the FMS try to increase the efficiency of its work in the "threatened" communities and to appeal to international instances, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the International Missionary Council, but it also sent its mission director, Matti Tarkkanen, to Africa to negotiate about the situation with various officials, including the Administrator of SWA

353 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 8 Oct. 1930, Eac30 and H. Saari to K.A. Paasio 1 June 1934, Eac35, AFMS, NAF.

354 Secretary for South West Africa to the presiding missionary of the FMS 19 July 1924, Eaj, AELCIN.

355 Kemppainen, 1998, p. 85.

356 Copy Secretary for the Protectorate to the Prefect Apostolic of Roman Catholic Church Windhoek 29 Oct. 1920, A489/2, SWAA, NAN; Administrator of SWA to Mission Director M. Tarkkanen 9 Jan. 1925, Hhd1, AFMS, NAF.

357 See Native Commissioner Windhoek to officer in charge of native affairs Ovamboland 2 July 1923, 4/1919/17, RCO, NAN; NCO to the Secretary for SWA 22 Jan. 1924, A489/2, SWAA, NAN; Memorandum for His Honour the Administrator by Chief Native Commissioner Harry Drew 2 Feb. 1924, A489/2, SWAA, NAN.

358 Secretary for South West Africa to the presiding missionary of the FMS 19 July 1924, Eaj, AELCIN.

359 See e.g. R. Rautanen's Annual Report 1924 (General report on Ovambo mission), mmm 20–21. Jan. 1925, Appendix 2, Hha9, AFMS, NAF.

and the Prime Minister of South Africa.[360] But it was all in vain, in the sense that the Anglicans and Catholics remained in Ovamboland. On the other hand, the SWA administration removed the territorial clauses of its earlier decision in 1926, thus opening all communities to all three missions.[361] Although the Finns were initially disappointed with this decision, too, and made a vague attempt to persuade the government to maintain the restrictions on the other missions in force, the second decision was obviously a step forward from the FMS point of view. After all, it was the strongest mission in the area and was now allowed to work freely in all communities.[362] So now the trenches were being dug, and by 1932 the Anglicans had founded two mission stations in Uukwanyama, and the Roman Catholics two in Uukwambi and one in Ombalantu.[363]

In the Finns' eyes, the Anglicans and Catholics were intruders, and understandably, their relation with them was far from cordial. In the long run relations with the Anglicans evolved differently from those with the Catholics. Initially it was the arrival of the Anglicans which was the greater shock to the Finns because, as Protestants, they should have "played according to the rules" and stayed out of a mission field occupied by another protestant church. But when the Finns realized that the Anglicans were not a real threat to the Lutheranization of the Kwanyama, a fairly functional relation evolved between the two missions. At least they could negotiate with each other when there were disagreements between them, and the Finns also learned to appreciate the Anglicans' medical work. But there were still many Finns who had very negative attitudes to Anglicans, and both sides kept a careful eye on the doings of the other.[364] After the Second World War relations with the Anglicans apparently improved further, because the resident missionary in Uukwanyama, Arvid Björklund, did not see any harm done even when a considerable number of Lutheran youths attended Anglican schools.[365] With the Roman Catholics things were different. They were considered a real threat and the doctrinal differences with them were greater than with the Anglicans. For the Finns, the Roman Catholics were "deceiving brothers" whose main aim seemed to be to lure as many Lutherans as possible to their own congregations and to cause as much harm to the Lutheran mission as possible. There were therefore practically no di-

360 Kemppainen, 1998, p. 74–116, 243–245.

361 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 7 April 1926, Eac26, AFMS, NAF; Kemppainen, 1998, p. 116–117, 245.

362 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 7 April 1926, 24 May 1926 and 31 July 1926, Eac26, AFMS, NAF; Kemppainen, 1998, p. 125.

363 Kemppainen, 1998, Map 2, p. 223. For a short description of the early work of the Anglican mission, see Houghton, 1965, p. 34–37.

364 Kemppainen, 1998, p. 122–125, 144–147, 167–168, 174–177, 194–197, 199–201, 244–246.

365 Some hundred Lutheran youths began studying at the Anglican school in Odibo in 1946–1947 because English was taught there as a foreign language. Many missionaries, including the presiding missionary, Viktor Alho, wanted something to be done to stop the flow, but Björklund had different views. He stressed that the Anglicans were in the service of the same Lord as the Finns, and that they had excellent schools. He also stated that any attempts to prevent people from going over to the Anglican Church would have been "acts of pitiful and childish bigotry", and that some of his fellow missionaries suffered from an irrational hatred for the British. (See A.W. Björklund to U. Paunu 21 March 1946, Eac41; A. W. Björklund to T. Vapaavuori 30 Dec. 1947, Eac42; V. Alho's circular to missionaries 10 July 1947, Eac42. All in AFMS, NAF.)

rect contacts with them.[366] There was one exception though: the Lutheran and Catholic medical staff had some personal contacts and cooperation.[367]

More important than the missionaries' relations with other missionaries were their relations with the Ovambo. Many aspects of this question will be discussed later, but it is necessary at this point to take a short look at the role which the Ovambo were given in the activities of the mission and in the administration of the congregations. The missionaries' long-term aim was to "make themselves unnecessary", i.e. to educate Africans who could gradually take over the work which they had initially been doing, and to whom the administration of the church could finally be handed over.[368] It was probably partly because of this principle, but mainly because the missionaries had more to do than they could handle, that the Ovambo were soon taken on for assisting duties, beginning with teaching. The first Ovambo helper was probably a boy called Negozi, who in his early teens helped the missionary Kurvinen to teach other pupils at the Oniipa station school in the early 1870s.[369] Later the Ovambo teachers were somewhat older. From the late 1880s onwards the missionaries began employing trustworthy Christians as assistant teachers to teach the rudiments of reading and the Christian religion to beginner pupils.[370] Gradually, as teacher training improved, it was possible to give Ovambo teachers more responsible tasks. The first indigenous teacher began working at the Oniipa teacher training school in 1936, and by 1951 five of the twelve boys' or girls' schools had an entirely African teaching staff.[371]

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366 Kemppainen, 1998, p. 117–122, 137–139, 142–143, 179–182, 186–188, 193, 200–201, 244–246. ** The mission director in 1954, Tuure Vapaavuori, was still of the opinion that it was quite impossible even to think of having any kind of cooperation with the Roman Catholics. By the early 1970s, when the Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango Church was already under African leadership, the tension between the Catholics and Lutherans seemed to have eased, at least to such an extent that the Lutheran bishop, Leonard Aula, could preach together with his Catholic counterpart. (See Tuure Vapaavuori, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani Afrikan työaloillemme ja Israeliin [Report on inspection tour in Africa and Israel] 20.6.–20.12.1954, p. 90. Dga, AELCIN; Walter, 1996, p. 145)

367 A. Melander's Annual Report 1951 (Onadjokwe hospital), mmm 24–25 Jan 1952, Appendix 10, Hha23; I. Saloheimo's Annual Report 1952 (Onandjokwe hospital), mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendix 11, Hha24; I. Saloheimo's Annual Report (Onadjokwe hospital) 1955, mmm 10–12 Jan. 1956, Appendix 4, Hha27. All in AFMS, NAF.

368 *Suomalaista raivaustyötä Afrikan erämaassa*, 1945, p. 148–150; Peltola, 1958, figure on page 214 and p. 215; Harjula, 1963, p. 31. ** It is worth noting that I have not come across any original document which clearly proves the existence of this aim, although traces of it can be found in some letters written by missionaries. It is equally worth noting that the aim is clearly stated in mission books which were published 70 to 80 years after the beginning of the work, i.e. when the process of reaching that aim was already well advanced. Whether the final aim was clear to the missionaries when they began their work in Ovamboland, we do not know, but it can be assumed that it may have already been a distant vision of the 19th century missionaries too. At least the general idea that the aim of (Lutheran) missionary work was to create independent and self-sustaining indigenous churches may already have existed, as it is known to have been formulated in the 1870s by the influential protestant mission theorist Gustav Warneck (see Teinonen, 1959, p. 195).

369 Lehtonen, 1999, p. 16.

370 Lehtonen, 1999, p. 29–31, table p. 40, 52–53, 58.

371 Tilastoa SLS:n Ambomaalla toimivista lastenkouluista [FMS school statistics, Ovamboland] 1951, Hha23, AFMS, NAF; Lehtonen, 1999, p. 91.

The Ovambo teachers were initially also evangelists, who were obliged to proselytize among the heathens in their neighbourhoods. Teaching and evangelization were separated in 1938, when the SWA administration *de facto* forbade preaching by persons who were not trained for it. This led the missionaries to commence evangelist training courses in 1943, and the education of evangelists was set on permanent footing in 1950 with the establishment of the Engela Congregational Institute.[372] A higher group of religious officials, i.e. ministers, came into being in 1925, when seven Ovambo men were ordained. The first Ovambo priests were not trusted so much as to be made equal with the missionaries, however, but became assistant pastors who performed limited tasks in their dependent parishes.[373] In this respect things changed somewhat in the late 1930s after the mission directors had advised missionaries to give Ovambo ministers a more independent role. Although many missionaries were apparently against such a step, twelve out of the eighteen congregations had been handed over to Ovambo pastors by 1938, with missionaries only supervising the work.[374] Judging from the missionaries' annual reports, the last parishes were handed over to indigenous ministers in 1947, after which the missionaries concentrated on school work and the general administration of the church. From that time on the work of the Ovambo ministers was supervised by three missionaries appointed as "supervisors of parochial districts" (predecessors of the present-day deans). The first Ovambo minister to reach the position of supervisor was Leonard Aula, in 1957.[375]

The role of lay Christians in the Ovamboland Lutheran Church was defined by its regulations, the first of which were issued in1924. At the parish level, all parishioners who were qualified for Holy Communion could attend parish meetings,

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372 H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 16 Dec. 1918, Eac21; W. Björklund to M. Tarkkanen 20 July 1933, Eac31; W. Björklund to U. Paunu 15 Dec. 1938, Eac38; V. Alho to U. Paunu 16 March 1939, Eac39; V. Alho to U. Paunu (to Uppsala) 30 April 1943; Eac40. All in AFMS, NAF. Copy Secretary for SWA to mission director 27 Jan. 1938, Eaj, AELCIN; Peltola, 1958, p. 213, 245.

373 E.g. N. Wäänänen, Uskallammeko vihkiä ambolaisia papeiksi? [Do we venture to ordain Ovambo ministers?], minutes of the field administration board 5 June 1925 §4, Appendix 1, Hha9, AFMS, NAF; E. Lehto, Suhteemme mustiin työtovereihimme [Our relation to black colleagues], mmm 14 Sept. to 6 Oct. 1925 §22, Appendix 6, Hha9, AFMS, NAF; *Suomalaista raivaustyötä*..., 1945, p. 101; Peltola, 1958, p. 212, 232. ** As an example of the role of Ovambo pastors in the 1930s, one may consider the division of labour in the parish of Oshitaji. This was actually an independent parish but without a permanent missionary. Kalle Petäjä, who was the missionary stationed in Oshigambo, presided over meetings with the Oshitaji parish elders and decided who should be admitted for baptism or confirmation. In other respects the parish was led by a lady-missionary, Hilma Ranttila, while an Ovambo pastor, Juuso Ngaikukwuete, performed those religious acts which required an ordained priest (see K.J. Petäjä's Annual Report 1932, mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendix 10. Hha12, AFMS,NAF).

374 W. Kivinen to K.A. Paasio 1 April 1935, Eac36 and to U. Paunu 25 Feb. 1938, Eac38, AFMS, NAF. ** On opposition to a more independent role for Ovambo pastors, see e.g. W. Kivinen to K. A. Paasio 9 April 1935, Eac36; W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 31 July 1936 & 2 July 1938 & 8 Nov. 1938, Eac37-38; I. Saukkonen to U. Paunu 23 April 1936 & 6 Aug. 1936, Eac37; H. Saari to U. Paunu 30 July 1938, Eac38. All in AFMS, NAF.

375 H. Saari to U. Paunu 16 April 1945, Eac41; V. Alho's Annual Report 1943 (General report on Ovambo mission), mmm 12–13 Jan 1944, Appendix 1, Hha20; Mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendices 3 (B. Eriksson, Southern Ondonga superivisory district), 6 (E. Pentti, Northern Ondonga) and 44 (T. Saarinen, Western communities), Hha24; B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1957 (General report on Ovambo mission), mmm 14–17 Jan. 1958, Appendix 1, Hha29. All in AFMS, NAF.

which decided on parish taxes and elected elders, Christians of good repute, to form the parish council. Their main duty was to ensure that the parishioners lived according to Christian principles, and they also assisted the local missionary/pastor when disciplinary actions had to be taken against parishioners.[376] At a more general level, i.e. in the Ovambo church, indigenous people also had some say in affairs from the mid-1920s onwards. They had their representatives in the highest executive body of the church, the administrative board, although missionaries made up the majority of its members until 1955. Theoretically, the administrative board supervised the work of the mission institutes in Ovamboland, among other things, but in practice it was the body which decided on excommunications and divorces.[377] Above the administrative board was the synod of the church, which assembled every few years. Its members included not only the leading missionaries and all Ovambo ministers, but also representatives of all the congregations. The synod was responsible for laying down general outlines and guiding principles for the Ovambo church.[378] Contrary to what one might assume, the synod was not the highest decision-making body of the church, because the board of directors of the FMS had an absolute power of veto over all its decisions until 1955, and the power to return a decision for reconsideration for some time after that.[379] However, since the board never exercised this latter right[380] the year 1955, or possibly 1957, when the South West African government recognized the Ovambo-Kavango Church as an official indigenous church[381], could be considered the year when the former Finnish mission church became an independent African church. It can be considered to have been independent at that stage even though its highest leaders, the moderators, were still Finns until 1960[382], and even though the Finns did not give up their last positions in the central administration of the church until the early 1960s[383].

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376 Ambomaan evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon järjestyssäännöt 1924 § 45, 55, 60, 61, 64; Ambomaan evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon järjestyssäännöt 1929/1938 § 48, 55, 60, 61, 64; Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church 1954/55 §8. Regulations for the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church 1958 § 119–121. All in Hhc2, AFMS, NAF. (There had already been parish elders before 1924, but the system had been informal. See chapter "What was to be created...").

377 Ambomaan...järjestyssäännöt 1924 §6–7; Ambomaan... järjestyssäännöt 1929/38 § 6–7; Constitution... 1954/55 §13. All in Hhc2, AFMS, NAF. On the practical functions of the administrative board, see Kirkkohallinnon kokousten pöytäkirjat [minutes of the administrative board] in Nba4, AELCIN.

378 Ambomaan... järjestyssäännöt 1924 §8; Ambomaan... järjestyssäännöt 1929/38 §9; Constitution... 1954/55 §11–12. All in Hhc2, AFMS, NAF.

379 Ambomaan...järjestyssäännöt 1924 §4; Ambomaan... järjestyssäännöt 1929/38 §4; Constitution...1954/55 §6. All in Hhc2, AFMS, NAF. (According to the constitution of 1954/55, a resolution by the synod, if it was opposed by the presiding missionary and the board of directors, did not take effect unless it was confirmed by a three-quarters majority in the next synod.)

380 In 1960 the chairman of the board of directors of the FMS, Prof. Mikko Juva, noted that so far the FMS had not felt any need to resort to its right of returning decisions for reconsideration and announced that it would not be used in the future, either. (Copy of M. Juva and O. Vuorela to the administrative board of the Ovambo-Kavango Church 3 Sept. 1960, Eac48, AFMS, NAF.)

381 B. Erikssson's Annual Report 1957 (General report), mmm 14–17 Jan. 1958, Appendix 1, Hha29, AFMS, NAF.

382 The first African moderator was Leonard Aula, who was later consecrated bishop in 1963 (see Shejavali, 1970, p. 18–19, 30).

383 A. Eirola to O. Vuorela and M. Juva 4 April 1964, Eac50, AFMS, NAF.

Migrant labour and colonial rule

In 1886 the Germans, who had declared South West Africa to be a colony of theirs in 1884,[384] and the Portuguese, who had a colony in Angola, used the ruler and divided Ovamboland between them. This act had no immediate consequences for the Ovambo, because neither power had the necessary power at that moment to take possession of its alleged possession in Ovamboland. The Germans, to whom the greater part of Ovamboland was supposed to belong, still had much to do in establishing their rule in Central and Southern SWA, and therefore any *de facto* occupation of Ovamboland was out of the question for the time being.

German colonialism advanced slowly in Central and Southern South West Africa. Initially the Germans gained land and mining concessions there by purchase and by swindling, but later, particularly after Theodor Leutwein had been appointed Governor of SWA in 1894, German rule was extended either by taking advantage of the frictions between and within the various African communities, or by sheer military force. For the latter option, the Germans had a contingent, the so-called Schutztruppe (Protection Force), which in 1893 consisted of some 250 men. By 1900 their combined use of "*divide at impera*" and the Schutztruppen had made them rulers of most of present-day Namibia, excluding Kaokoveld, Ovamboland, Okavango and Caprivi. Large areas of African land had been alienated for the use of the mining companies or for European settlement, and although neither mining nor settlement had advanced very far by the beginning of the twentieth century, the prospects for making South West Africa a prosperous German settler colony seemed promising.[385] But a rebuff came in 1904: the Herero, the most powerful people of Central SWA, rose up against the Germans, and it was only by sending a large expeditionary force under the command of General Lothar von Trotha that the Germans could suppress the uprising. Ruthless methods were used, and towards the end of the war, in October 1904, von Trotha gave his notorious order to exterminate or exile all the Herero. Although this order was later mitigated by the German government, the suppression of the uprising led to genocide as far as the Herero were concerned[386]. It did not pacify the country, however, for while the Herero uprising was still going on, the Nama, the most

384 On the background to the German declaration and the related political confusion between Germany, Great Britain and the Cape Colony, see Goldblatt, 1971, p. 79–98; Drechsler, 1984b, p. 29–37; Ngavirue, 1997, p. 79–84.

385 On the emergence and consolidation of German colonial rule in general, see e.g. Goldblatt, 1971, p. 95–128; Drechsler, 1984a, p. 14–50; Drechsler, 1984b, p. 71–130; Bley, 1996, p. 3–141; Ngavirue, 1997, p. 70–115. On the role of the German missionaries in the colonizing process, see Loth, 1963, p. 103–104, 110–121; Hellberg, 1997, p. 61–62, 64–67, 74–76, 81–106; Oermann, 1999, p. 54–81, 87–91.

386 There are no totally reliable figures available concerning the extent of the genocide. According to the highest estimates, some 90 per cent of the Herero died in the course of the suppression of the uprising, while Horst Drechsler claims that the number of Herero in SWA dropped from the pre-uprising figure of some 80,000 to around 15,000 in 1911. See Goldblatt, 1971, p. 133; Drechsler, 1984a, p. 174; Bley, 1996, p. 151.

powerful people of Southern SWA, revolted against Germans, also in October 1904. Their uprising was finally suppressed in 1907.[387]

After the suppression of the uprisings the European-led economy of SWA began to flourish. The lands belonging to the "rebels" were confiscated and made available to European settlers whose number in the colony rose from less than 5,000 in 1903 to some 15,000 in 1913.[388] At the same time the mining industry was started up when the mining of copper for export commenced in Otavi and Tsumeb and the mining of diamonds began in the Lüderitz area in 1908. In order to make commercial farming and mining economically possible, the Germans had to improve the harbour installations and build a network of railways.[389] The success of all these economic activities depended ultimately on the availability of cheap African labour. But because the vast majority of the Herero had been eliminated and the number of Nama had been reduced considerably[390] as the consequence of the suppression of their uprisings, there was a serious labour shortage in SWA in the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century[391] . In this situation the Germans turned their eyes to Ovamboland, which was regarded as a suitable new source of cheap migrant labour.

The migration of Ovambo labour to the south did not actually begin with the suppression of the uprisings, for there may already have been some Ovambo labourers in Central SWA in the 1880s, and certainly in the 1890s.[392] Nor was the idea that large numbers of Ovambo should be enticed to move south for temporary work invented in the twentieth century; The idea of Ovamboland as a human reserve for large-scale labour migration had already been put forward in 1894, by Richard Hindorf, a German expert on settlement and agriculture.[393] By the beginning of the twentieth century the Germans had also developed the idea of occupying Ovamboland, and had therefore increased their military presence in Northern-Hereroland in the late 1890s by establishing several military stations and prepared plans for annexing Ovamboland.[394] Thus in 1899 the kings of Ondonga and Uukwanyama were obliged to receive Lt. Viktor Franke, who was the first German official to visit Ovamboland. He was basically on a reconnaissance mission, but he also tried to persuade the missionaries to encourage labour migration.[395] Although

387 On the Herero and Nama uprisings, see e.g. Goldblatt, 1971, p. 129–143; Drechsler, 1984a, p. 51–130; Drechsler, 1984b, p. 131–220; Bley, 1996, p. 142–169; Ngavirue, 1997, p. 115–124; Oermann, 1999, p. 93–112.

388 Goldblatt, 1971, p. 150–151, 173, 200.

389 On mining and harbours, see Dierks, 1999, p. 71–73, 77, 79, 85. On railways, see Dierks, 1999, p. 54–55, 57, 59, 72–75, 78–85, 88.

390 According to estimates, the Nama population was reduced by between 35 and something over 50 per cent as a consequence of the uprising (see Bley, 1996, p. 151; Ngavirue, 1997, p. 142).

391 E.g. Goldblatt, 1971, p. 182; Clarence-Smith & Moorsom, 1975, p. 377–378; Moorsom, 1977, p. 13; Gordon, 1978, p. 263; Drechsler, 1984b, p. 222–223; Strassegger, 1988, p. 38–41, 49–51.

392 Tönjes, 1911, p. 88; Stals, 1969, p. 321; Clarence-Smith & Moorsom, 1975, p. 375; Moorsom, 1977, p. 36; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 230; Hayes, 1992, p. 149. The number of Ovambo working in the south before the 20th century is not know, but it apparently amounted to several hundreds annually (see Kouvalainen, 1980, p. 40 and Strassegger, 1988, p. 34, 37).

393 Strassegger, 1988, p. 35–37.

394 Eirola, 1992, 77–84.

395 Strassegger, 1988, p. 38; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 174; Eirola, 1992, p. 100–107.

Franke's mission was far from successful, the Germans sent several other officers on reconnaissance trips to Ovamboland in the first years of the twentieth century,[396] but these still did not lead to occupation of the area.

What did change after the suppression of the uprisings was that the Germans intensified their efforts to obtain labour from the north and altered their methods. Military conquest of Ovamboland was deemed not to be possible for the time being, and therefore the Germans decided to take measures of another kind. The first was the Ovamboland Act of 1906, which made Ovamboland an isolated reserve and, among other things, forbade the entrance of European traders from the Police Zone[397], thus ending the direct availability of European goods in the north. Conversely, this meant that anybody wanting to have access to European goods had to go south and work there for the money with which to buy them.[398] The next step was taken in 1908, when Viktor Franke, now Captain, again visited Ovamboland and persuaded the kings to sign declarations of obedience to the German Kaiser. The background to these declarations was the Portuguese advance in Southern Angola, which both the Germans and the kings regarded as a threat. The Germans were afraid that the Portuguese might not respect the border treaty of 1886, and this was also a nightmare for the kings, because the Portuguese were known to be heavy-handed colonial rulers. Franke now promised the kings German protection, and they in exchange promised not to obstruct the enlistment of their subjects for migrant work. What the kings did not accept, although Franke suggested it, was the establishment of German military posts in Ovamboland. Thus the only German "administration" there consisted of some civil servants who occasionally visited the area, mostly in order to promote labour migration.[399]

The number of migrant labourers coming south increased considerably after the isolation of Ovamboland and the declarations of obedience. Whereas some 1,700 men had done so in 1907, the corresponding figure in 1910 was around 9,000 and that in 1913 (which marked the high point) was around 12,000.[400] But

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396 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 174–176; Eirola, 1992, p. 129–135, 138–148.

397 The Police Zone/Polizei Zone, which came into being simultaneously with the creation of the Ovamboland reserve, comprised the central and southern areas of SWA (i.e. excluding Kaokoveld, Ovamboland, Okavango and Caprivi), which were under direct control of the German, and later South African, colonial administration, and where Europeans were permitted to settle under police protection (see Silvester & Wallace & Hayes, 1998, p. 3 note 3).

398 E.g. Kouvalainen, 1980, p. 88–89; Strassegger, 1988, p. 51–52; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 187–188; Eirola, 1992, p. 189–192.

399 Strassegger, 1988, p. 57–58, 61–62, 68–75; Eirola, 1992, p. 216–225, 227, 230–240, 253–257, 269–273.

400 Stals, 1969, p. 333; Moorsom, 1977, p. 37; Strassegger, 1988, p. 81–82. (The figures in these sources do not tally with each other exactly, but are of the same magnitude.) ** The reasons for the willingness of the Ovambo to participate in migrant labour (push factors) have been studied throughly in earlier research, and it is therefore sufficient in this context simply to try to summarize the findings: The main reason for going to work in the Police Zone at the beginning of the twentieth century appears to have been a general pauperization which took place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, caused by intra-community and inter-community raiding, the rinderpest disaster of 1897 and a sequence of poor harvests in the first years of the 20th century. Labour migration as a means of escaping absolute poverty is emphasized by the fact that there seems to be some correlation between poor harvests and the numbers of migrants in the years

even these thousands of Ovambo could not solve the labour problem, particularly because the migration rates varied greatly according to the agricultural cycle in Ovamboland. Some newspapers, chiefly those representing the interests of the mining companies, therefore demanded that Ovamboland should be occupied. This was something which the German administration was not willing to undertake.[401] Their decision not to annex Ovamboland, either in the 1910s or earlier, was based on a simple cost-benefit analysis. The area had no mineral riches, nor was it considered suitable for European settlement. Its only valuable product was labour, and the colonial administrators did not believe that the number of incoming labourers could be markedly increased by using coercive methods. Anyway, the use of coercion would only have been possible if the Ovambo communities had been subdued militarily. This would have meant war with the most populous and well-armed people of SWA; a war which would obviously have been beyond the resources of the Schutztruppe (some 2,200 German soldiers in 1910)[402]. More troops would have been needed, but they were not forthcoming, because after the Herero and Nama uprisings the Colonial Office and the Reichstag were reluctant to let Germany become engaged in yet another war with Africans, at least as long as the Portuguese stayed on their side of the *de jure* 1886 border.[403] It was therefore best to forget the occupation and to be satisfied with the number of labourers who were coming south voluntarily. Thus, all in all, the Ovambo communities in 1914 were isolated, surrounded and nominally under German supremacy, but as far as their internal and mutual affairs were concerned, they were still independent.

Things changed in 1915 because of the First World War. The German troops in SWA surrendered to the South Africans on 9 July 1915, and soon after that, in late August 1915, the first South African representative, Major S.M. Pritchard, arrived in Ovamboland. His task was to introduce the new government of SWA to Ovambo rulers and to invite their co-operation in encouraging migrant labour,[404]

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between 1907 and 1914. Later in the twentieth century it was the growing difficulties in the Ovambo subsistence economy caused by shortages of land and grazing that forced men to enter into labour contracts. But it was not only their absolute poverty that drew young men to the south. They also became migrant labourers because of their relative poverty. Young rank-and-file Ovambo men were disadvantaged compared with the older men or members of the elite, in the sense that they had little access to socially important "European" goods or cattle. By becoming migrant labourers and earning money, they could gain access to these goods, which would otherwise have remained out of their reach for a long time. The desire to alleviate relative poverty remained an important rationale for labour migration in later times as well, as some 60 per cent of the laborers whom Peter Banghart interviewed in the 1960s mentioned relative poverty as their motivation for going south. (See Banghart, 1969, p. 91, table XXIX p. 92, 97, 103–104; Clarence-Smith & Moorsom, 1975, p. 376–379; Moorsom, 1977, p. 36–40; Gordon, 1978, p. 273–274; Strassegger, 1988, p. 77–79; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 232–236; Hayes, 1992, p. 146–153; McKittrick, 1995, p. 122–125; Kreike, 1996, p. 65, 194, 207–211; Emmett, 1999, p. 171–173, 175; McKittrick, 2002, p. 124–128, 173–177, 182–184.)

401 Strassegger, 1988, p. 59–62.

402 Eirola, 1992, p. 274.

403 See Lehmann, 1954/55, p. 279–280; Clarence-Smith & Moorsom, 1975, p. 378; Kotze, 1984, p. 13; Strassegger, 1988, p. 32, 52, 59, 61–62, 71, 75; Eirola, 1992, p. 77, 82–84, 106–111, 119, 122, 141–143, 188–190, 192–193, 198–199, 218–221, 243–245, 256–257; Hayes, 1992, p. 112, 116–117, 120–122.

404 Pritchard, 1915, par. 2.

although it may be that the real motive for Pritchard's tour was to reconnoitre the area for subsequent military take-over.[405] Whatever it was, events turned his tour into something more than just an introductory trip. Just before Pritchard's arrival, King Mandume of Uukwanyama had suffered a crushing defeat by the Portuguese on the Angolan side of Ovamboland and had been forced to retreat south of the border, where he asked Pritchard for South African protection. This Pritchard was willing to grant on certain conditions.[406] There were also fears among the population that the Portuguese would continue their attack further south and subdue the whole of Ovamboland, or that the Kwanyama fleeing to SWA Ovamboland might bring the whole area into chaos. These fears, judging from Pritchard's report, made at least King Martin of Ondonga willing to place his kingdom under South African supremacy.[407] When it is further noted that at the time of Pritchard's tour Ovamboland was suffering from a devastating famine which had obviously negated the capacity of the Ovambo military resistance, it is no wonder that Pritchard recommended to his superiors that a South African administration should be established in Ovamboland.[408] This took place in November 1915, when Major Charles Manning (who had been appointed Resident Commissioner of Ovamboland), Major Charles Fairlie (to become Union Government Representative stationed at Namakunde in Uukwanyama) and five other South African officials arrived in Ovamboland.[409]

Meredith McKittrick has pointed out that it would be misleading to give1915 as the year of the colonial conquest of Ovamboland, and as far as western Ovamboland is concerned, it would also be meaningless.[410] It is true that there was no conquest of Ovamboland in the actual (military) sense of the word, but this year does mark the establishment of a resident colonial authority, which then gradually grew stronger. The interesting thing is obviously the ease with which the South Africans were able to establish their rule in Ovamboland. While the Germans had planned a takeover of the area for decades but had never been able to realize it, the South Africans achieved the same in a matter of a couple of months without resorting to violence (at least not yet in 1915). That was simply because the timing of their arrival was perfect. Because of the Portuguese advance from the north, the Ovambo kings felt that they were between the devil and the deep blue sea. They had to submit themselves to the lesser evil (the South Africans) because the Portuguese success against the Kwanyama and the devastation wrought by the famine clearly showed them that they would not at that time be able to put up any effective resistance against the Europeans. The uniqueness of the opportunity was also noted by Pritchard:

405 Cf. McKittrick, 1995, p. 82–83.
406 Pritchard, 1915, par. 21, 28–29, 36–37, 42–43, 60–61. On Mandume's conflict with the Portuguese and its background, see Hayes, 1992, p. 176–177, 189–196.
407 Pritchard, 1915, par. 29–30, 33–34, 62.
408 Pritchard, 1915, par. 100–101.
409 Kotze, 1984, p. 30–32, 35.
410 McKittrick, 1995, p. 85. See also McKittrick, 2002, p. 152–153, 156, 170.

> "Circumstances are in our favour, and we should take advantage of the natives' frame of mind and act. It will be difficult to imagine so unique an opportunity of establishing a political administration in a country in which, in other circumstances, resistance to authority might with reason have been anticipated."[411]

The main objective of the South African administration in Ovamboland was to ensure a regular supply of migrant labour to meet the needs of the European economic sector in the Police Zone. This is evident from the expressed aims of Pritchard's tour, and was also clearly declared by Administrator Gorges in 1917, for according to him, the chief value of Ovamboland lay in the large supply of labour which it afforded for the needs of the European community in the Protectorate.[412] Furthermore, the primacy of the labour question was seen in 1924, when Anglican and Roman Catholic missions were allowed to enter Ovamboland on condition that their missionaries promised to promote labour migration.[413] Recruitment of a workforce was not only the main objective of the administration, but also originally its main activity, because up to 1925 all labour recruiting was organized by the Native Commissioner[414]. But such "*ex officio*" recruiting was considered ineffective, and therefore the mining companies founded two labour recruiting organizations in that year: the Southern Labour Organization (SLO) to recruit workers for the diamond mines, and the Northern Labour Organization (NLO) for the northern mines and farms. The efficiency of recruiting was further increased in 1943 by amalgamating the SLO and NLO into one organization, the South West Africa Native Labour Association (SWANLA).[415]

The mode of administration which the South Africans adopted for Ovamboland at first was not based on the presence of large numbers of European officials[416]. Rather, it can be described as having been indirect and non-interventionist. Whatever the reasons for such an approach may have been[417], the colonial

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411 Pritchard, 1915, par. 101.

412 Report on the conduct of the Ovakuanyama Chief Mandume, and on the military operations conducted against him in Ovamboland, 1917, par. 42, p. 6.

413 Secretary for SWA to the presiding missionary of the FMS 19 July 1924. Eaj, AELCIN. (On the primacy of labour migration as an objective of the colonial administration in Ovamboland, see also Gordon, 1978, p. 277; Kotze, 1984, p. 91; McKittrick, 1995, p. 90; Kreike, 1996, p. 191–192.)

414 The title of the head of the Ovamboland administration was changed from Resident Commissioner to Native Commissioner Ovamboland in 1921, when military administration of SWA was replaced by a civilian colonial administration. Seven years later the "Union Government Representative" (Uukwanyama official) was changed to "Officer-in-Charge of Native Affairs", and in 1938 the post was upgraded to that of "Assistant Native Commissioner Ovamboland".

415 Gordon, 1978, p. 266, 269; Cooper, 1999, p. 124–125, 137.

416 When the Austrian anthropologist Viktor Lebzelter visited Ovamboland in 1927 there were only three South African officials in the area, the Native Commissioner, Union Government Representative and a clerk (Lebzelter, 1934, p. 192). A fourth official who normally resided there was the District Surgeon. In 1932 the number of European officials was again three (Administrator of SWA to the Prime Minister of South Africa 2 sept. 1932, par. 99, 2/12, A450, NAN).

417 Several potential explanations, which are not mutually exclusive, have been given for the adoption of indirect rule in Ovamboland: 1) Knowing that the Ovambo were still well armed and were suspicious of the aims of the colonial government, the South Africans did not want to disturb the

administration of Ovamboland was based on a kind of a partnership between the colonial officials and indigenous rulers, in which the South Africans did not interfere with tribal affairs as long as no hindrances were placed in the way of labour migration, and the rule of the kings and headmen did not include "rank savagery or barbarous acts"[418]. What this meant in practice can be illustrated with a description of the system of the administration of law; All civil and most criminal cases were tried in indigenous courts. The first instance was the court of the local headman, while the king, or the court of councillor headmen in a community that had no king, served as the court of appeal. The nominal highest court of appeal was the Native Commissioner, although he occasionally refused to try appellate cases. As far as punishments were concerned, the indigenous courts, including the kings, had no right to pass death sentences. The most serious crimes (murder, culpable homicide, rape and high treason) were tried initially by the Resident Commissioner and later by colonial courts outside Ovamboland.[419]

The ideal of non-interference with the actions of kings was seriously infringed twice. The first time was in 1917, when King Mandume of Uukwanyama was deposed. When he had placed himself under the protection of South Africans in 1915, he had been forbidden to cross the border to northern Uukwanyama, which was considered Portuguese territory. He contravened this order several times by visiting or raiding northern Uukwanyama, and occasionally even by fighting against Portuguese troops. Mandume's aim was apparently either to boost his prestige as the king of the whole of Uukwanyma, or to maintain law and order in the northern parts of his kingdom, but for the South Africans these excursions were not only acts of blatant defiance of colonial authority but also a source of constant embarrassment, because they led the Portuguese to question the South Africans' ability to maintain order at the frontier. Since it was not believed that Mandume would submit peacefully, the South African government authorized the sending of a military expedition to Ovamboland to depose him in October 1916. The expeditionary force was a strong one (some 700 troops and 150 African auxiliaries com-

traditional system too drastically, in order not to provoke an armed uprising, 2) establishing a large European administrative staff for direct rule would have been beyond the financial resources of the South Africans, 3) the Ovambo system of administration was found to be functioning well, and 4) a system building on the Ovambo communities' own institutions and customs was considered to be the best way of developing them (See NCO Annual Report 1940, p. 10, 2/18, A450; NAN; Ass. NCO, Oshikango, Annual Report 1948, p. 6, 12/2, NAO, NAN; Report on the conduct..., 1917, par. 42, p. 6; Bruwer, 1961, p. 29; Kotze, 1984, p.45; Hayes, 1992, p. 237–240; McKittrick, 1995, p. 87, 89–90).

418 NCO Annual Report 1926, p. 3, 11/1 (vol. 1), NAO, NAN (cf. Government Notice no. 60 of 1930, which defines the duties of chiefs and headmen. According to paragraph 7, kings were obliged to prevent native customs which were against the law or the principles of humanity and decency).

419 See Copy C.H.L. Hahn to L.S. Amery M.P., 11 Jan. 1938, 2/11, A450, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1926, p. 3, 11/1, NAO, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1940, p. 55, 59, 2/18, A450, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1942, p. 29, 31. 11/1, NAO, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1946, p. 16, 11/1, NAO, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1951, p. 3, 12/2, NAO, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1952, p. 3, 12/2, NAO, NAN; Report of the Commission of Enquiry into South West Africa Affairs 1962–1963, 1964, par.286–289; Hayes, 1992, p. 243.

manded by Colonel de Jager), because Mandume was known to be well-armed, and a defeat by him would have meant a decisive loss of prestige for the colonial administration. The force arrived in Ondonga in January 1917 and advanced via Namakunde to Oihole [Ehole], where Mandume resided. There, on the 6th of February 1917, a half-hour battle took place in which Mandume and some hundred of his warriors were killed.[420] After Mandume's death the kingship over Uukwanyama was abolished and a quasi-traditional form of indirect rule was established. The community was divided into eight districts, each under the jurisdiction of a councillor (principle) headman, and the districts were further divided into wards, each under a sub-headman. The eight principle headmen together constituted the Council of Headmen which, under the supervision of the Government Representative / Assistant Native Commissioner, exercised the same curtailed powers as were possessed elsewhere by kings. There was one exception, though: land tenure was vested in individual headmen, and not in the Council of Headmen.[421]

The second interference took place in 1932, when King Iipumbu of Uukwambi was dethroned. He had actually been "the fly in the ointment" for both the administration and the Finnish mission ever since Mandume had been deposed. Around 1920 Iipumbu was seen as a tyrant who harassed Christians and travellers (the latter harassment being harmful to the recruitment of labour from the northwestern communities), committed acts of sexual violence against women and extorted property from his subjects or imposed cruel penalties upon them.[422] There had apparently been plans to depose Iipumbu at this time,[423] but his conflict with the government first flared up after he had sent a raiding party to Uukwanyama in November 1921. For this offence the Administrator of SWA imposed a fine on him, but Iipumbu refused to pay it in full. This led the government to prepare for a military expedition against him. The date for action had already been fixed for the 30 July 1923, but at the last moment the planned expedition was called off. After this Iipumbu paid his fine and relative calm ensued for a few years.[424]

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420 Quite a lot has been written about Mandume's fall. See Report of the conduct..., 1917; "*Healing the Land*", 1997, p. 81–94; Kotze, 1984, p. 60–86; Williams, 1991, p. 153–157; Hayes, 1992, p. 207–236; Silvester, 1995, p. 12–34.

421 Bruwer, 1961, p. 27–28, 32–36; Kreike, 1996, p. 121–122.

422 S. and A. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 10 July 1918, Eac21; H. Saari to H. Haahti 27 Jan. 1921 and to the Board of Directors of the FMS 3 March 1921, Eac22; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1922 (Elim), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1923, Appendix 11, Hha8. All in AFMS, NAF; Copy O. Tylväs to Resident Commissioner 3 Aug. 1922, Eaj, AELCIN; Copy Resident Commissioner to the Secretary for SWA 8 Feb. 1923 and Copy Administrator of SWA to the Prime Minister of South Africa 2 Sept. 1932, par. 7–8, 2/12, A450, NAN; Hayes, 1992, p. 253–254; Hartmann, 1998, p. 275 including footnote 58.

423 Hayes, 1992, p. 253; Hartmann, 1998, p. 276. ** Rumours about government action against Iipumbu also circulated amongst the missionaries from time to time. Aini and Sulo Aarni already believed in 1918 that Iipumbu might soon be dethroned because the white government had absolutely no trust in him. Similarly, at the beginning of 1921, Heikki Saari informed the Assistant Mission Director that the Englishmen had told him that Iipumbu would soon be deposed because the king's impudence was increasing all the time (see S. and A. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 15 Dec. 1918, Eac21; H. Saari to H. Haahti 27 Jan. 1921, Eac22. Both in AFMS, NAF).

424 Administrator of SWA to the Prime Minister of South Africa 2 Sept 1932, par. 9–17, 20, 24, 2/12, A450, NAN. There were apparently several reasons for calling off the expedition. It was planned to be carried out by forces from Uukwanyama and Ondonga. King Martin of Ondonga had

The chain of events which finally led to Iipumbu's fall began in 1931, although he had obviously lost a lot of his popularity and prestige as king before that. Between 1925 and 1928 several of his leading headmen fled the country.[425] His "favourite wife", who wanted to become a Christian, followed the at the beginning of 1931. Similarly, also hundreds of Iipumbu's subjects had fled to other communities in 1930 because the king did not allow government famine relief work in Uukwambi.[426] It may be that this loss of prestige made Iipumbu look for an "external" enemy to which the people's attention could be drawn, which might explain why he ended up in a serious confrontation with the Finnish missionaries in 1931, accusing them of posing a threat to his power[427]. As pointed out earlier, Iipumbu now took coercive actions against Christians in particular, and demanded that Christian girls should participate in *ohango*. This was a sure way of coming into conflict with the missionaries, and it also inspired fears among Christian girls, many of whom fled to the Elim mission station after the missionary Aho had promised them refuge there. Iipumbu was not pleased. In June he sent a group of armed men to Elim to demand the extradition of the refugee girls. Aho refused and after six hours of verbal threats the men left. The next night Aho sent the girls

originally promised to participate, but at the last moment Ondonga "ratted" (as the Administrator put it), i.e. the Ndonga tribal meeting refused to send troops against Iipumbu because he was not considered to have done anything wrong. After the meeting King Martin explained his motives to Martti Rautanen, saying that he did not want to go to war because "the English" tried to make the situation to look like a conflict between Iipumbu and Martin and not, as it was, one between Iipumbu and the colonial administration. Martin's explanation fits in nicely with another possible reason which Patricia Hayes has pointed out. She suggests that the South Africans wanted to use predominantly black troops in the expedition against Iipumbu because their military actions against the Bondelswarts uprising in 1922 had met with unfavourable international attention. Thus, because Martin and Ndonga now refused to play their role in the "internal Ovambo squabble", there were not enough African troops available and the expedition had to be cancelled. But there is also another possible explanation, also connected with the South Africans' concern about their reputation. The missionary Oskari Tylväs, who was working in Uukwambi at that time, later claimed that it was actually he who had prevented the war against Iipumbu by refusing to obey the government's order to leave Uukwambi before the planned military action. His refusal made the government to accuse him of disloyalty, and the colonial administration probably wanted the missionary out so that they could have waged war against Iipumbu without independent European observers who might have leaked embarrassing information about the military action. Tylväs' refusal to leave dashed this prerequisite and may indeed have contributed to cancellation of the expedition. (In addition to the above mentioned Administrator's letter, see M. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 20-23 June 1923 and 2 Aug. 1923, Eac2; N. Wäänänen to M. Tarkkanen 1 Aug 1923, Eac23; R. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 23 Sept. 1923, Eac23; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1928 (Elim), mmm 21 Jan. 1929, unnumbered appendix, Hha10. All in AFMS, NAF; Hayes, 1992, p. 257.)

425 Hayes, 1992, p. 258–259. Native Commissioner noted that these flights weakened Iipumbu's prestige both among his subjects and among the other kings (see NCO Monthly Report May–June 1930, p. 1; NCO Montly Report October 1930, p. 2; NCO Annual Report 1930, p. 4. All in 11/1, NAO, NAN).

426 O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 23 Jan. 1931 and 5 March 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF; O. Aho's Annual Report 1930 (Elim), mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 28, Hha11, AFMS, NAF. ** There is some contradictory information about the person who actually forbade the famine relief work in Uukwambi. Aho claims that it was Iipumbu, while Patricia Hayes, basing her argument on colonial records, claims that it was the Native Commissioner Hahn, who wanted to punish Iipumbu for his uncooperativeness. (see Hayes, 1992, p. 324).

427 See chapter "Missionaries' activities and the...".

to Ondonga. This obviously took place just in time, because for the next few days Elim was practically besieged by Iipumbu's troops.[428] Now the situation had become so serious that the missionaries decided to inform the Native Commissioner about what was happening in Uukwambi.[429] After this the administration warned Iipumbu, and a short period of uneasy calm followed.[430]

In October 1931 Iipumbu and Aho were on the warpath again,[431] but the situation heated up in earnest on the 30th December 1931, when a 14 or 15-year-old girl, Nekulu yaShivute, fled from the court to the Elim station. Iipumbu was very keen on this girl and apparently wanted her as his wife. He came to Elim and demanded that Aho should hand over the girl. Aho refused, saying that by so doing he would violate the customs of the country concerning refuge. The king became furious. He threatened to kill Aho and burn the mission station. He also ordered his troops to siege Elim, and there was much shouting and shooting the next night. The following day the missionary Saukkonen came from Ondonga by car to evacuate Mrs. Aho and her children. He also took Nekulu with him, hidden in a trunk under clothes. On New Year's Day Iipumbu's troops dispersed people who had come for church service, and the same happened on Sunday 3rd January, when several Christians were beaten. The siege ended that evening, when Native Commissioner Hahn arrived and ordered Iipumbu to withdraw his troops.[432]

The government rebuked Aho slightly for having aggravated the situation and demanded that he be transferred from Uukwambi. The mission saw no fault in Aho's actions but in the end submitted to the demand.[433] The real felon in the government's eyes was nevertheless Iipumbu, on whom a fine of ten head of cattle was imposed, and when payment was not received within the time stipulated, i.e. by 20th June 1932, it became apparent that military force would have to be used.[434]

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428 O. Aho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF.

429 Copy Presiding Missionary V. Alho to NCO 21 July 1931, Eaj, AELCIN; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 23 July 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF.

430 L. Thomson for the NCO to the Presiding Missionary of the FMS 14 Nov. 1931, Eaj, AELCIN; Administrator of SWA to the Prime Minister of South Africa 2 Sept. 1932, par. 34, 2/12, A450, NAN; NCO Monthly Report September – October 1931, p. 1, 11/1, NAO, NAN; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 15 Oct. 1931, Eac30,AFMS, NAF.

431 This time the conflict was about two Christian girls whom Iipumbu had abducted. When Aho went to Iipumbu's homestead to complain about the incident, the king refused to meet him but delivered a message: " I have not abducted white women, nor Ndonga, nor Herero. I have taken my own people. They are here and they will stay here. What have you got to do with my people? Go home." (O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 22 Oct. 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF.)

432 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 16 Jan. 1932, Eac31; O. Aho, Nekulun asia [Nekulu affair] 25 Jan. 1932, Hha11. Both in AFMS, NAF; Copy Presiding Missionary V. Alho to NCO 20 Jan. 1932, Eaj, AELCIN; Sworn statement by Fikameni Ipumbu 1 Dec. 1932, 5/2, NAO, NAN. See also Hayes. 1992. p. 261–262; Hartmann, 1998, p. 277–278.

433 Copy Administrator of SWA to the Prime Minister of South Africa 2 Sept. 1932, par. 45, 2/12 A450, NAN; Secretary for SWA to the Presiding Missionary V. Alho 4 March 1932 and 18 May 1932; Copies Presiding Missionary V. Alho to the Secretary for SWA 11 April 1932 and 2 June 1932. All in Eaj, AELCIN; Minutes of the field administration board 6 June 1932 §1; Mmm 12–13 July 1932 §5. Both in Nba4, AELCIN. V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 7 June 1932, Eac31, AFMS, NAF.

434 Copy Administrator of SWA to the Prime Minister of South Africa 2 Sept 1932, par. 46–57, 2/12, A450, NAN. On Iipumbu's unwillingness to pay, see also the sworn statement by Fikameni Ipumbu 1 Dec. 1932, 5/2, NAO, NAN.

Iipumbu had been able to defy the government once, and a second successful defiance was considered too heavy a blow against colonial government's authority in Ovamboland.[435] An ultimatum was delivered to the king on the 27 July, and the fine was raised to 50 head of cattle, to be paid within five days. If he failed to pay he was expected to surrender to the authorities. Iipumbu neither paid nor surrendered, and on 15th August 1932 his homestead was bombed by three aeroplanes supported by an armoured car. By this time the king had already left his homestead and was heading for Angola. He was later arrested in Uukwanyama and deported to Okavango. After the king's fall, a similar council of headmen was established in Uukwambi as in Uukwanyama.[436]

Uukwanyama 1917 and Uukwambi 1932 were the most direct cases of South African involvement in the authority of the indigenous leaders. A third case, which arose in 1939, was Ondonga, where King Martin was on the brink of being dethroned by the South Africans but finally remained in power.[437] But apart from these dramatic events, there were also some gradual, evolutionary processes which strengthened the white administration, so that in 1938 Native Commissioner Hahn could characterize the mode of Ovamboland administration as being indirect rule in a modified form[438] .

The first of these processes was the final demarcation of the border between the Portuguese and South African territories. The original border treaty between Germany and Portugal had been obscure, and had defined the border as a direct line running east from the waterfall on the Kunene River to the same latitude on the Okavango River. The problem was that there were two waterfalls on the Kunene, Ruacana and Kazombue, and therefore the treaty included a strip of land some 11 km wide and 440 km long, with no defined possessor. In 1915 the South Africans

435 Both the Administrator and Native Commissioner Hahn referred in their reports to the maintenance of government prestige as the ultimate reason for the military actions. (Copy Administrator of SWA to the Prime Minister of South Africa 2 Sept. 1932, par. 50, 65, 95–96, 2/12, A450, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1932, p. 8, 11/1, NAO, NAN.)

436 Copy Administrator of SWA to the Prime Minister of South Africa 2 Sept. 1932, par. 55–93, 2/12, A450, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1932, p. 8–9, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Sworn statement by Fikameni Ipumbu 1 Dec. 1932. 5/2, NAO, NAN. See also Hayes, 1992, p. 263–264.

437 The colonial administration had for a long time been dissatisfied with Martin's rule, but the crisis arose when the king refused to hand over two murder suspects to be tried at the High Court. One of them was Johannes (Kambonde) kaNamene, the heir to the throne, who had shot Andreas Shindondola, the head of the Queen Mother Frieda's (Mutaleni's) court, who had become a highly respected figure in Ondonga. This, according to Namuhuja, made Martin and Johannes suspicious of his intentions. On the other hand, Andreas may also have had an affair with Johannes' "girl friend". Whether Johannes committed a political murder or a crime of passion is irrelevant. The important point is that King Martin refused at first to hand the heir over to European court although the murder had caused considerable agitation (riots, according to Namuhuja) among the Ndonga. He eventually submitted when the administration sent a contingent of police officers and three fighter planes to Ovamboland. Johannes was then tried for murder at the High Court and acquitted. (I have a recollection of having seen a document stating that Johannes was found to have acted in self-defence.) He became king in 1942. (NCO Annual Report 1939, p. 5–10, 2/18, A450, NAN; NCO Monthly Reports Oct–Nov. 1939, p. 5 and Dec. 1939, p. 4–5, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Namuhuja, 2002, p. 39–43.)

438 NCO Annual Report 1938, p. 31, 11/1, NAO, NAN.

and Portuguese agreed that the area would be provisionally co-administrated as a Neutral Zone by representatives of both governments stationed at Namakunde. After long negotiations it was agreed in 1926 that the Neutral Zone would be transferred to Portugal after a transition period of two years. Because the Kwanyama were not very keen on living under the heavy-handed Portuguese, the border agreements led to large-scale migrations to the south, first from Portuguese Uukwanyama to the Neutral Zone in the 1910s and then to the SWA part of Uukwanyama in the late 1920s. This influx of people caused problems in the latter territory, which was already densely populated, and later made the colonial administration commence development projects aimed at opening up areas east of the original kingdom of Uukwanyama for settlement.[439]

The second major change, aimed at reducing the threat of an Ovambo uprising, was gradual disarmament. This began with the Kwanyama, who had to hand in their rifles after Mandume's fall. The Ndonga followed in 1930 and 1931, when some 2000 rifles were relinquished. The king and headmen still had arms, but these were confiscated in 1939, when Martin had defied the government. The Kwambi were disarmed in 1932, after Iipumbu's fall, and the western communities during the following few years. Thus Hahn could report in 1937 that practically all the Ovambo had been disarmed.[440] Partly connected with this disarmament was the introduction of taxation in Ovamboland. Initially the colonial administration had been reluctant to impose taxes on Ovamboland, because it was afraid that such a step would not be accepted by the well-armed Ovambo.[441] But during the famine, in 1929, the administration succeeded in getting the consent of the kings and headmen to the establishment of Tribal Trust Funds, under which every married man was liable to pay a certain amount annually into the Fund for his community, either in cash or in grain. The cash was used to finance various development projects and the tribal administration, while the grain was used for famine relief.[442]

Apart from major changes such as disarmament and taxation, the tightening colonial grip on the administration was also felt at the community level. One example of this can be seen in the actions of Native Commissioner Hahn. Since he considered many of the older-generation rulers to be "suspicious", "cunning" and resistant to colonial notions of progress, he began "training" their heirs and successors as kings and headmen in the 1930s and 1940s, and also "counselled" the kings to rely on young advisers, whom he saw as being more in favour of the kind of development in Ovambo communities which also was in the interests of the colonial government.[443] Apart from "training" and "counselling", Hahn also occasionally in-

439 See Pritchard, 1915, par. 58; Loeb, 1962, p. 37; Hayes, 1992, p. 207–208, 265–269; Kreike, 1996, p. 99–103, 116–135; Vigne, 1998, p. 294–304.

440 NCO Annual Reports 1930, p. 2 & 1931, p. 5 & 1932, p. 10–11 & 1937, p. 3, 11/1, NAO, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1939, p. 9, 2/18, A450, NAN; Copy Administrator of SWA to the Prime Minister of South Africa 2 Sept. 1932, par. 65, 82, 85, 87, 96, 99, 2/12, A450, NAN; Kotze, 1984, p. 85.

441 See Hayes, 1992, p. 299; Hayes, 1998, p. 123; McKittrick, 1998, p. 250.

442 NCO Annual Report 1929, p. 10 and 1936, p. 20, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Copy C.H.L. Hahn to L. S. Amery 11 Jan. 1938, 2/11, A450, NAN; McKittrick, 1995, p. 97, 239–240; Hayes, 1998, p. 130.

443 McKittrick, 1995, p. 160–163; McKittrick, 2002, p. 194–197.

terfered with the succession to the throne, as he did in Ondonga in 1942, when he supported the first heir in the line of succession against another candidate supported by the old king-maker, the "Queen Mother" Mutaleni.[444] In addition to Hahn's intrusions in the kings' business, the independent use of power by the "traditional" authorities was also eroded by the introduction of "modern" petty civil servants, tribal secretaries, into the community administration. There was a tribal secretary in Uukwanyama before 1940, and secretaries were appointed for Ondonga, Uukwambi and Ombalantu in 1949. These Ovambo officials were responsible, among other things, for execution of the decisions made by councils of headmen and for the collection of taxes. They also acted as intermediates between the traditional leaders and the colonial administration, thus gaining influence in the administration of their communities.[445]

Part of the continuous extension of colonial influence in Ovamboland consisted of the ever-increasing economic importance of migrant labour, particularly after the Second World War, and the social disruption caused by it. The figures suggest that annual recruitment between the world wars was actually somewhat lower than during the German period, varying from zero during the depression of the early 1930s to a little over 7,000 in the late 1930s. The average number of labourers recruited annually was four thousand, of whom 20 to 40 per cent were from Angola. Total recruitment in the 1940s and 1950s varied between approximately 6,000 and 20,000, of whom four to thirteen thousand were SWA Ovambo. Finally, average annual recruitment from SWA Ovamboland during the next decade was 17,500.[446]

The recruitment figures as such tell us only superficially about the growing role of migrant labour during the South African period, because they partly ignore three important new phenomena that now emerged: multiple contracts, prolonged periods of contract and the migration of married men for labour purposes. While the labour migrants would go south for a single contract of six to nine months during the German period, the standard contract in the 1920s was for 12 months.[447] According to Banghard and Gordon, the normal maximum period was fixed at 18 months in 1935,[448] while in the late 1940s and early 1950s the mini-

444 NCO to the Secretary of SWA 14 Oct. 1942, A460/20, SWAA, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1942, p. 3–4, 11/1, NAO, NAN. Hahn was also active in appointing headmen at his own discretion (Becker, 1995, p. 88).

445 NCO Annual Report 1940, p. 2, 2/18, A450, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1949, p. 1, 12/2, NAO, NAN; Bruwer, 1961, p. 34; Tötemeyer, 1978, p. 47 and endnote 66 p. 226; McKittrick, 1995, p. 246, note 75.

446 Notkola & Siiskonen, 2000, Table 10.8, p. 157–158.

447 Gordon, 1978, p. 265; Hayes, 1992, p. 156; Kreike, 1996, p. 198–199, 213–214.

448 Banghard, 1969, p. 34; Gordon, 1978, p. 267–268. It is interesting that both refer to Proclamation 29/1935 as their source. They agree on the 18-month contracts, but otherwise they seem to disagree. While Banghard claims that contracts could be extended to 42 months (for married men) or 48 months (for single men), Gordon says that the proclamation made it illegal for a migrant labourer to negotiate for another job immediately after his contract had ended. My examination of the proclamation, assuming that I understood all the legal jargon, did not reveal any stipulations concerning the length of contracts, not even the 18-month rule. Gordon's claim that immediate renewal of a contract was forbidden, also appears to be contrary to section seven of the proclamation.

mum contract for unmarried men seems to have been 24 months, with a possible extension to 30 months, although it was later reduced to 18 months. In the late 1960s the contract periods varied from 12 to 30 months.[449] The effects of the lengthening periods were further intensified by the fact that men began going south for work more than once in their life. Multiple contracts apparently became common in the 1930s, even though they were not totally unknown earlier.[450] In 1942 Native Commissioner Hahn stated that men went south for 3 to 4 contracts of 12 to 18 months each.[451] This meant that men normally spent three to six years of their lives as migrant labourers. Hahn may have underestimated the time spent as a labourer, or else the period may have become even longer later, because Kreike interviewed a man who went to the Police Zone eight times as a migrant labourer during the 1940s and early 1950s,[452] and two of the present interviewees, the pastors Titus Ngula and Frans Kaukondi, had been migrant labourers in the 1940s and 1950s, both going to work after primary school, at the age of seventeen and remaining under contract practically all the time for the following years, Ngula for nine years and Kaukondi for seven.[453] Their careers as migrant labourers were apparently fairly normal for their time[454], except for the fact that Rev. Ngula married only after his last contract. Initially migrant labourers were unmarried men, but from the late 1920s, with the spread of multiple contracts, it became more and more common for married men to be involved in labour migration.[455] In the 1960s married men were estimated to make up a half, or even three-quarters, of all migrant labourers.[456]

The developments in migrant labour meant that more men were away from home. Kreike has calculated that in the late 1920s some 13 to 19 per cent of adult men at any given time were at work elsewhere, while the corresponding figure for Kwanyama men in the late 1930s varied between 15 and 24 per cent, and the figure for all Ovambo men in the early 1950s was around 20 per cent.[457] The correspond-

449 See Tötemeyer, 1971, p. 145; Gordon, 1978, p. 270; Kreike, 1996, p. 214, 224. Gordon and Kreike disagree about when the 24-month contract was introduced. According to Kreike it was either in 1940 or 1941, but Gordon claims that it was in 1950.

450 See Hayes, 1992, p. 333–334; McKittrick, 1995, p. 236; Kreike, 1996, p. 210–211, 213. Multiple contracts were apparently not totally unknown even at the beginning of the 20th century, because the Rhenish missionary August Wulfhorst stated in 1905 that Kwanyama men took up second contracts with reluctance (see Hayes, 1992, p. 151, footnote 200).

451 Quoted in Kreike, 1996, p. 220.

452 Kreike, 1996, p. 219.

453 Titus Ngula, interviewed on 19 Nov. 1998 at Oshitayi, Ondonga; Frans Kaukondi, interviewed on 7 Dec. 1998 at Onemanya, Ongandjera.

454 Peter Banghart, who conducted interviews in the late 1960s with people who had been migrant labourers, found that half of his interviewees had been on contracts for a total period of six to ten years. (Banghart, 1969, table XXVIII, p. 78.)

455 See Hayes, 1992, p. 275, 334; McKittrick, 1995, p. 135, 182, 185, 236, 244; McKittrick, 1998, p. 246, 250; McKittrick, 2002, p. 226–228.

456 Banghart, 1969, table XVIII, p. 65. Tuupainen, 1970, p. 111. Rauha Voipio, who studied the effects of migrant labour, found in 1970 that there were men who had been married for 20 years but were still working on such a basis (see Voipio, 1980, p. 128–129).

457 Kreike, 1996, table 6.2. p. 198, p. 216, 227. Colonial records usually give somewhat lower estimates (see Gordon, 1978, p. 261).

ing figures in the late 1960s are estimated to have been something between 35 and 60 per cent.[458] Although Notkola and Siiskonen have criticized some earlier research for setting the proportion of the absentee population too high, their estimates also show that men's absence because of migrant labour began to increase in the 1950s.[459]

The increased loss of adult men to migrant labour could not have taken place without some demographic effects[460], or without causing some economic and social difficulties. As more and more men, married as well as under age[461], left to work for longer periods, there emerged a shortage of labour in local agriculture. This appears not to have been an insuperable problem until the Second World War, because at least the Kwanyama were able to combine labour demands for crop cultivation and migrant labour up to the mid 1930s.[462] After the war the situation was different. As more married men were going south to work, the burden of subsistence agriculture and cattle herding rested more on the shoulders of the wives, children and elderly. This led to decreased production which, together with other emerging phenomena such as the poorer availability of farming land, made Ovambo households, in particular those with a smaller work force, more dependent on the inadequate income from the migrant labourers even for obtaining the necessary food.[463] The prolonged absence of (married) men also led to other socio-economic difficulties. Widows who had all their adult sons working in the south could sometimes face serious difficulties because there was nobody to live with them and support them.[464] It has also been argued that migrant labour made divorces more common in Ovamboland, when wives were exhausted by their bur-

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458 Bruwer, 1961, p. 86; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 110; Banghart, 1972, p. 272.

459 Notkola and Siiskonen have estimated that less than 4 per cent of the total Ovamboland population was engaged annually in migrant labour in the time between the world wars. The corresponding later figures would have been about 5 per cent in 1950, around 6 per cent in 1960, and about 12 per cent in 1974 (see Notkola & Siiskonen, 2000, p. 156–157).

460 According to the findings of Notkola and Siiskonen, the fertility of Ovambo women declined during the 1940s and 1950s. This was at least partly caused by the mens' lengthened stays on work contracts, which led to a lower frequency of intercourse in marital relations (see Notkola & Siiskonen, 2000, p. 84–85).

461 The official minimum age for becoming a migrant labourer was 18, but it is obvious that this rule was commonly broken and the minors went south to work particularly from the 1940s onwards (see e.g. Hayes, 1992, p. 276, 286; McKittrick, 1995, p. 236; Kreike, 1996, p. 217, 224–225, footnote 51 p. 224; McKittrick, 2002, p. 174, 183). One visiting colonial official even stated in 1948 that many of the migrant labourers who were leaving for the south seemed to be something like 15 to 16 years of age. Similarly, the Mission Director Vapaavuori noted in his 1954 inspection report that it was common practice to allow under-age boys to enter labour contracts. (Copy Public Service Inspector to the Secretary for SWA 30 June 1948, 3/2, NAO, NAN; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani Afrikan työaloillemme ja Israeliin 20 kesäkuuta – 20 joulukuuta 1954, p. 81. Dga, AELCIN.)

462 Kreike, 1996, p. 212.

463 See Bruwer, 1961, p. 87; Voipio, 1980, p. 119–120, 127, 132–134; Hishongwa, 1992, p. 96–101; Becker, 1995, p. 97–98; McKittrick, 1995, p. 234–239, 242–246; Kreike, 1996, p. 189, 201–202, 222–224, 227–232, 235, 269; McKittrick, 1998, p. 250–252; McKittrick, 2002, p. 229–233. Banghart, on the other hand, was of the opinion that migrant labour had little or no harmful effects (see Banghart, 1972, p. 280–281).

464 McKittrick, 1995, p. 228; McKittrick, 2002, p. 234.

den and either returned to their parents or found a resident man to help them with the agricultural tasks. There are also claims that wives were *de facto* abandoned by many migrant labourers who established second families in the south.[465] On the other hand, it can be argued that the women gained a more independent status when their husbands were away, because many of them became heads of households.[466]

Although migrant labour caused socio-economic problems, the system also had a small positive side – wages. Kreike has calculated that the total annual earnings of Kwanyama labourers in the 1920s were something around £20,000 sterling.[467] During the early colonial period the money thus earned was mostly used to obtain goods which were socially important. The men bought European clothes or cloths, or used their money to buy cattle, which they needed to get married. As far as unmarried men were concerned, this motivation for migrant labour appears also to have been prevalent after the Second World War,[468] but from the 1930s the deteriorating economic situation back home somewhat altered the rationale of labour migration. Now money had to be earned to feed one's kin.[469] It was also from that time onwards that savings began to be invested in the development of agricultural production, which meant first and foremost the buying of ploughs.[470]

In the political arena, two new interrelated phenomena came into being after the Second World War. The first was apartheid, which emerged after the National Party came into power in South Africa in 1948. Because South West Africa was at the time administered as a de facto fifth province of South Africa, the apartheid system was introduced there as well. The first phase was the so-called *baaskap* (white supremacy) apartheid, which rigorously segregated whites and blacks culturally, socially and even physically. White supremacy also meant that African interests were systematically subordinated to those of the whites, and that any services which the government provided for Africans were far inferior to those provided for whites. At the beginning of the 1960s the growing international criticism forced the South African government to modify their notion of apartheid, and the

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465 See e.g. Tuupainen, 1970, p. 112; Voipio, 1980, p. 123–126, 129, 131; Hishongwa, 1992, p. 88, 101, 104; Hayes, 1992, p. 334–336; Becker, 1995, p. 97–98; McKittrick, 1995, p. 246–247; Kreike, 1996, 288.

466 See Becker, 1995, p. 98–99; McKittrick, 1995, p. 238; Kreike, 1996, p.259, 270. This argument has also been questioned (see Hishongwa, 1992, p. 100; Becker & Hinz, 1995, p. 68 footnote 288).

467 Kreike, 1996, Table 6.4. p. 207.

468 See Hayes, 1992, p. 279; McKittrick, 1995, p. 124–125, 181–182, 236, 240; Kreike, 1996, p. 205, 209–211, 219–220, 236–237. ** Viktor Lebzelter presented a calculation of how the migrant labourers spent their earnings in the late 1920s. Although he does not say what information this is based on, it is still worth quoting: He claimed that a migrant laborer who worked for 10 months would have earned £30 (a estimate which sounds rather high) and may have spent some £5 of this on tobacco and sweets while at work, while some £5 was needed as a "gift" for the king or headman. Of the remaining £20 he would have spent another £5 or so on buying himself clothes, and some £10 on buying other commodities. This would have left him with £5 to take to home (see Lebzelter, 1934, p. 219).

469 See Banghart, 1969, table XXIX, p. 92; Voipio, 1980, p. 119; Hishongwa 1992, p. 101; McKittrick, 1995, p. 182–183, 230–231, 236, 240.

470 Banghart, 1969, p. 133–134; Kreike, 1996, p. 237–238.

idea of separate development was introduced. According to this new dogma, it was best for Africans to express themselves politically in accordance with their own traditions and develop their own areas separately from the whites. As a consequence, South West Africa was divided in 1968 into a European area and ten African "homelands", of which Ovamboland was one. In reality the homelands were quasi-self-governing and economically inviable labour reserves.[471]

The inequities of apartheid prompted the Africans to commence resistance against colonial rule. Activism first emerged among the migrant workers in the Police Zone, who responded to the increasing coercion involved in the migrant labour system by organizing several strikes at the mines and industrial plants in the 1940s and 1950s.[472] In 1959 this resistance came to be organized in the context of a political movement, and the Ovamboland People's Organization (OPO), known from 1960 on as the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), was founded. The first objectives of the new movement were to transfer the SWA mandate to the United Nations Trusteeship Council and to abolish the contract labour system.[473]

New forms of political activism also arrived in Ovamboland when OPO was founded. The first sign of it to be mentioned in the missionaries' documents was a declaration sent by "The Defenders of the Ovambo-Kavango Nation" in 1959 to the editor of the church newspaper, *Omukwetu*, for publication, providing information about the founding of the OPO and making a number of allegations against SWANLA and the traditional authorities.[474] Later both the missionaries and the Ovambo pastors received other letters accusing them of various malpractices, and the missionaries were also faced with other forms of political activity, particularly in Uukwanyama. Erkki Hynönen, who was the resident missionary in Engela until early in 1961, reported several times on political meetings and fund-raising campaigns organized by the OPO. In the mid-1960 there were also widespread rumours that OPO was planning to kill all whites and traditional leaders.[475]

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471 See Goldblatt, 1971, p. 234–247; Tötemeyer, 1978, p. 49–58; Omer-Cooper, 1994, p. 193–215, 284–286; Dierks, 1999, p. 116 ff.

472 On labour unrest and its causes, see Gordon, 1993, p. 162–163; Emmett, 1999, p. 257–273; Cooper, 2001, p. 273–274.

473 On the founding of the OPO, see Emmett, 1999, p. 273–281; Cooper, 2001, p. 274–276.

474 E.J. Pentti to A. Hukka 25 Sept. 1959, Ncd1, AELCIN.

475 A. Hukka to O. Vuorela 31 Dec. 1959; Copy Mr Hamutukulula to E. Hynönen 19 Nov. 1959; Copy of S. Nujoma's telegram to E. Hynönen 21 Nov. 1959; Copy OPO Tsumeb branch to E. Hynönen 22 Feb. 1960; B. Eriksson to O. Vuorela 19 May 1960; E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 18 Dec. 1959 & 29 Dec. 1959 & 4 March 1960 & 28 March 1960 & 25 April 1960 & 4 July 1960 & 8 Aug. 1960 & 3 Oct. 1960 & 5 Dec. 1960 & 15 Jan. 1961 & 23 Jan. 1961. All in Eac48–49, AFMS, NAF. (Political activism in the early 1960s and missionaries' opinions of it will be discussed in more detail in chapter "Evolution of...".)

Change – aims and relations

Missionaries re-creating the Ovambo

This sub-chapter deals with the missionaries as agents of cultural change, particularly with their aims concerning the changing of the Ovambo. The issue of the missionaries' aims can be divided into two sub-questions. Firstly, how did they view the original Ovambo culture and which aspects of it did they want Christians to abandon? And secondly, what kind of a person did they want to create instead of the "heathen" Ovambo? A third aspect of the process concerns the methods which the missionaries used to create Christian Ovambos.

What was to be destroyed…

Without doing too much injustice to the Finnish missionaries, it can be said that their view of the Ovambo (particularly the heathen Ovambo, but in many respects also the christianized ones) was filled with the very same stereotyped views about Africans which were common among their fellow-Europeans at the time. The Ovambo were filthy, lazy, clumsy, greedy, thieving, unenterprising, unrestrained, dissembling and congenitally licentious children of the day who did not properly care about tomorrow, nor did they have any mathematical skills.[1] Even in the late

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1 See S. Rainio to J. Mustakallio 20 April 1912, Eac17; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 20 July 1914, Eac19; A. Glad to M. Tarkkanen 14 Feb. 1918, Eac21; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 29 April 1919, Eac21; A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 7 June 1920, Eac22; R. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 20 July 1920, Eac22; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 25 March 1920, Eac22; A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 24 Aug. 1921 and to K.A. Paasio 7 Sept. 1921, Eac22; A. Perheentupa to M. Tarkkanen 20 July 1922, Eac23; N. Wäänänen to M. Tarkkanen 23 Oct. 1922, Eac23; G. Asikainen to M. Tarkkanen 10 April 1924, Eac24; R. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 11 April 1924, Eac24; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 28 Sept. 1928, Eac28; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 11 Feb. 1930, Eac30; Oniipan seminaarin lukusuunnitelmaehdotus vuosille 1932-34, Eac30; W. Kivinen to M. Tarkkanen 2 March 1930, Eac30; E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 13 Feb. 1930, Eac30; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 12 Jan. 1931, Eac30; M. Anttila to M. Tarkkanen 11 Nov. 1932, Eac31; J. Syrjä to M. Tarkkanen 1 May 1932, Eac31; A. Glad to K.A. Paasio s.d. 1934 and 3 Jan. 1935, Eac35-36; W. Kivinen to K.A. Paasio 9 April 1935, Eac36; I. Saukkonen to U. Paunu 6 Aug 1936, Eac37; V. Alho to U. Paunu 6 Nov. 1937, Eac38; A. Hänninen to U. Paunu 29 Jan. 1937, Eac38; W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 19 Aug. and 22 Aug. 1938, Eac38; A. Soini to U. Paunu 12 Oct. and 10 Nov. 1938, Eac38; A. Soini to U. Paunu 3 April 1939, Eac39; J. Syrjä to U. Paunu 6 Jan. 1941, Eac40; K. Harjanne to U. Paunu 2 March 1946, Eac41; A. Melander to T. Vapaavuori 8 Sept. 1947, Eac42; U. Poikolainen to O. Vuorela 30 Sept. 1956, Eac47; General Report on Ovambo Mission 1941, mmm 21–22 Jan. 1942, Appendix 1, Hha19. All in AFMS, NAF. Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912 [Report on the tour of inspection into Ovamboland 1911–1912], p. 20–21, Lb, AELCIN.

1930s the missionary Lehto was of the opinion that the Ovambo were so immersed in vice that a white man could hardly regard them as free human beings. But that was no wonder, because in his opinion, the ignorant Ovambo had had centuries in which to gather one layer of darkness upon another, while at the same time the Europeans had enjoyed centuries of Christian light and of education based on this.[2]

Although the missionaries' view of Africans was somewhat pejorative, they occasionally had positive comments to make about them and their original culture. Alho, for example, once stated that respect for the elderly was admirable among the heathen,[3] and young missionaries such as Aatu Järvinen and Antti Perheentupa could even praise the Ovambo for their amiability.[4] It is thus evident that positive comments existed although they were less frequent than negative ones. After the Second World War, however, the trend in the missionaries' letters was towards a less pejorative image of the Africans. They were no longer so totally incompetent and evil as before, although one thing remained unchanged; In the missionaries' eyes all Africans, even the best of them, were still just children, even in the 1950s,[5] as they always had been[6].

As for the cultural practises which the missionary work was supposed to destroy, i.e. those which were considered unacceptable for a proper Christian way of life, there was a hard core of definitely forbidden customs, such as polygamy and *ohango*, and a host of other customs which the missionaries considered unchristian, but which they occasionally had to allow because they were fervently defended by the Ovambo Christians. The wedding ox fell into this category. Furthermore, there seem to have been practices, apparently of minor moral importance, which some missionaries allowed in their congregations while others forbade

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2 Lehto, Erkki, Ambolähetyksen tulevaisuus [The future of the Ovambo mission], s.d. but for the late 1930s, p. 1–2, Hhb2, AFMS, NAF.

3 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 29 May 1917, Eac20, AFMS, NAF.

4 A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 30 Sept. 1919 and A. Perheentupa to M. Tarkkanen 9 April 1921, Eac21–22, AFMS, NAF. ** Both missionaries used the black-white dichotomy when praising the Ovambo. Järvinen wrote that he gained much joy from working with the local people, and that therefore they must have white hearts under their black skins, while Perheentupa, writing when he had been in Africa for only four months, said that he had fallen in love with the Ovambo people, who were not only amiable but in many respects on a higher level than some "degenerated elements" in Finland. He went on to state that "even the blackness of their skin seems to fade away" as he learned to know them. It is interesting that Järvinen's later comments about the Ovambo were mostly highly negative (e.g. A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 7 June 1920, Eac22, AFMS, NAF). It may be that he discovered the reality between 1919 and 1920, or else that he had been taught the "proper" attitude to Africans by older missionaries. The latter option cannot be excluded, because according to Walde Kivinen's comment, older missionaries often indoctrinated newcomers with their own pejorative views on Africans (see W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 19 Aug. 1938, Eac38, AFMS, NAF).

5 E.g. L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori and W. Kivinen 23 Jan. 1953, Eac45; Copy T. Vapaavuori to L. Lindström 19 Aug. 1953, Eac45. Both in AFMS, NAF. Presiding missionary B. Eriksson's circular to the missionaries in Ovamboland 15 April 1958, Eae, AELCIN.

6 On the late 19th and early 20th century missionary concept of the evil and/or childish Ovambo, see Varis, 1988, p. 48–54, 116–117. On the women missionaries' predominantly negative view of Africans, contrasted with their sometimes quite positive view of Christian Africans, see Kena, 2000, p. 286–298.

Young Kwanyama men wearing the traditional front apron. These men are unmarried, as indicated by the upright leather spikes at the back of their belts. In the missionaries' opinion, such clothing represented "indecent pagan nakedness", which was regarded as an important cause of the Africans' "lack of sexual restraint", and Christian men were therefore expected to wear trousers and a shirt. (Tönjes, Ovamboland, 1911)

them.[7] But merely banning certain customs is not just (according to "normal morals"), unless you have proper grounds for doing so, and finding proper grounds for forbidding Ovambo customs seems to have been something of a problem for the missionaries. When one tries to figure out on what grounds the Finnish missionaries decided that certain Ovambo customs were unacceptable to Christians, one soon finds oneself in a quagmire of contradictory arguments, obscure logic and far-fetched reasoning.

It may be best to start by referring to a paper which Walde Kivinen prepared in the late 1930s as an argument against the government's accusations that the Finns were destroying the Ovambos' traditional culture. Kivinen divided Ovambo customs into three categories. The first was purely national customs [rein völkischer Sitten] and customs which were based on natural conditions. These included the system of kinship, modes of co-operation in agriculture and forms of hospitality. According to him, the Finns had never fought against this group of customs. The second was "customs which are called national but which in reality are based on savagery, ignorance and heathen superstition". These included infanticide, abortion, the killing of witches and inhuman healing methods, practices that caused a lot of suffering and had to be opposed. The final group consisted of "surviving su-

7 See e.g. M. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 24 Jan. 1917, Eac2; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 2 April 1917, Eac20; V. Alho to K.A. Paasio 25 Jan. 1935, Eac36. All in AFMS, NAF.

perstitious customs which originate from centuries of heathenism". Here Kivinen gave a long list of agricultural taboos which he claimed were contrary to economic progress among the people and should therefore be opposed.[8] His list thus shows that any custom which could be considered unchristian, uncivilised, inhuman or uneconomic should be abolished. On the other hand, a little earlier Kivinen had said in the Ondonga tribal meeting that the missionaries were only against customs which were "heathen" and in contradiction to the Christian way of life.[9] A custom did not have to be clearly "heathen" to be unacceptable, but at least in some cases, even the slightest connection with "heathenism" was considered enough to justify prohibition.[10] Yet even if a certain custom was acceptable according to this maxim, it did not mean that the missionaries necessarily considered it to be such. Sometimes customs were opposed by saying that since the Bible did not explicitly allow the custom, it was unacceptable for Christians.[11]

Kivinen's second way of defining the missionaries' aims, i.e. to destroy only customs which are "unchristian", seems to reflect the way in which they propagated their aims to the Ovambo and to the colonial administration.[12] The same idea in a different context is also revealed by the instructions which missionaries gave to their adherents concerning loyalty to the traditional leaders; Ovambo Christians were advised to be obedient to kings and headmen provided that they were not expected to do anything which was contrary to the Christian faith.[13] The obvious

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8 Kivinen, Walde, Die Volksitten, s.d. (1936 or 1937), Hhb2, AFMS, NAF.

9 W. Kivinen to K.A Saarilahti 2–6 Oct. 1935, Eac36, AFMS, NAF.

10 W. Kivinen, Mistä kenkä puristaa? [What makes the shoe too tight?] in W. Kivinen, Raportti lähetysjohtaja tohtori Uno Paunulle hänen saapuessaan tarkastusmatkalle Ambomaalle vuonna 1937 [Report to Mission Director U. Paunu on his arrival in Ovamboland 1937], Appendix 1, Hhb2, AFMS, NAF. ** Kivinen writes in his report about Ovambo teachers and preachers. In his opinion they must be men who have "knowingly and finally dissociated themselves from old heathenism or any custom which is connected to heathenism even in the slightest way". That was essential because it was the only way to show common Ovambo Christians that "these men have become happy just because they have renounced *everything old*". [My italics] For other references to the idea that all customs showing even the slightest connection with "heathenism" should be abandoned, or that the "boundary" between heathenism and Christianity must be absolutely clear, see for example, E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 14 Aug. 1918, Eac21; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 14 March 1927, Eac27; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 18 Feb. 1928, Eac28; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 22 March 1929, Eac29; I. Saukkonen to Ovamboland church administration 25 March 1935, Eac36; T. Vapaavuori to U. Paunu 9 Aug. 1946, Eac41; Saari, Heikki, Mitä parannuksia olisi toivottava lähetystyöhön nähden? [How mission work should be improved], mmm 14 Sept.-–6 Oct. 1925, Appendix 3, Hha9. All in AFMS, NAF. Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan ja Okavangon lähetysalueilla pidetyistä tarkastuksista 1946 [minutes of the inspections in Ovamboland and Okavango 1946], p. 2, 4–5, 7, 9, 17, 27–28, Daac, AELCIN; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani Afrikan työaloillemme ja Israeliin 20 kesäkuuta – 20 joulukuuta 1954, p. 65, Dga, AELCIN.

11 This argumentation was used against the wedding ox. See Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan ja Okavangon lähetysalueilla pidetyistä tarkastuksista 1946, p. 2, Daac, AELCIN; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 11 Feb. 1921, Eac22, AFMS, NAF.

12 T. Vapaavuori to M. Tarkkanen 23 Jan. 1933, Eac31; Käännös Walde Kivisen administraattorille 1936 antamasta SLS:n vuosikertomuksesta [translation of the annual report of the FMS for 1936 to the Administrator of SWA by Walde Kivinen], Hhd1. Both in AFMS, NAF; Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan ja Okavangon lähetysalueilla pidetyistä tarkastuksista 1946 [Minutes of the Mission Director's inpections in Ovamboland and Okavango 1946], p.7, 13, 18, Daac, AELCIN.

13 Koivu, Kalle, Miten lähettien on suhtautuminen maakalaishallituksiin [What attitude should missionaries adopt towards native rulers?], mmm 22 Sept. 1911, Appendix 11, Hha6; A. Järvinen to

problem which remains now is that concepts "contrary to the Christian faith" and "unchristian" are very vague, so that practically any custom could be labelled as "unchristian". This indeed seems to be what the presiding missionary, Viktor Alho, was ready to do. According to him, customs and religion are usually so closely bound together that advising people to stick to their old customs means that they are also being advised to stick to their old religion. He also felt that the missionary theorists of his day had excessively liberal views concerning the preservation of African customs, and that *The International Review of Missions* had far too few writings about the dangers facing Christianity if African Christians are allowed to maintain their old customs.[14]

It is worth taking a look at this point at how Alho argued against allowing the custom of *oyonda* among the Ovambo Christians, i.e. why he thought it improper for an Ovambo groom to give his bride's parents an ox. Alho started out by saying that even though some missionaries seemed to believe that the wedding ox was just one of the "national" customs, it was still well known to everybody that even the "national" customs of heathens were usually filled with heathenism. He then referred to the Bible, noting that the Old Testament indeed has references to bride prices, but that according to the New Testament wives were not bought. He then draws the conclusion that the buying of wives had ended in Europe with the emergence of Christianity, while relics of the old custom were still surviving in Africa, the Ovambo wedding ox among them. But it was not just the historical origin of the wedding ox that made it unacceptable to Christians, but also its function. Alho referred to the fact that the ox was slaughtered and consumed at the wedding feast. This was unacceptable from the Christian point of view because such feasting with meat was based on greed and self-indulgence.[15] Apart from the fact that Alho incorrectly claims that *oyonda* was a lobola-type bride-wealth, his way of thinking also involves a couple of aspects which are rather interesting. He obviously had no evidence to prove that a wedding ox was unchristian (i.e. unbiblical), but he still felt a need to argue against the practice. Therefore he resorted to obscure logic: "It is well know to everybody that every aspect of non-Christian culture is embedded in heathenism, and since the wedding ox is a custom of a non-Christian culture, it must be heathen by definition even though this cannot be proved." Thus, by stating that everything non-Christian is unchristian, Alho actually releases himself from the task of proving his point. In the absence of proper biblical arguments against the wedding ox, Alho also used the culturally arrogant concept of unilineal

M. Tarkkanen 27 Nov. 1923, Eac23; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 5 March 1931, Eac30; W. Kivinen to K.A. Saarilahti 2–6 Oct. 1935, Eac36. All in AFMS, NAF.

14 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 12 Nov. 1932, Eac31, AFMS, NAF. A couple of years later Alho expressed his views in a slightly more tolerant tone, saying that missionaries should understand the importance of "national customs" to some extent, but still make a clear difference between Christianity and "heathenism" (see V. Alho to K.A. Paasio 21 Jan. 1935, Eac36, AFMS, NAF).

15 V. Alho, Häähärkä seurakunnissa [The wedding ox in our parishes], mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 23b. Hha8, AFMS, NAF. The arguments quoted above are only part of Alho's arsenal against the wedding ox. In general, his paper is long, muddled and contains innumerable contradictory claims.

cultural evolution[16]: "The wedding ox was a relic of an older, less developed, cultural form which was bound to disappear with the evolutionary process, and therefore attempts to maintain it would simply have been waste of resources, as it was destined to disappear anyway." So far so good, but Alho's third argument is the real masterstroke. Here he claims that although the wedding ox *per se* might not be unchristian, it was still unacceptable for Christians because its acceptance might have led to behaviour (in this case feasting) which was considered unacceptable for Christians.

Alho's reasoning against the wedding ox was quite far-fetched, and the same can be said of one set of arguments used against the Ovambo matrilineal system of kinship. The missionaries claimed that in a matrilineal system the fathers played too minor a role in the upbringing of the children and had no right to discipline their offspring. This was most unfortunate because the firm disciplining of children was considered an essential precondition for building a proper Christian character, and mothers were in general considered to be too lenient in bringing up their children. Therefore the proper Christian upbringing of children was in jeopardy as long as the traditional system of kinship was preserved.[17] In other words, the missionaries were basically arguing that the Ovambo should have shifted from a matrilineal system of kinship to a patrilineal one so that fathers could whip their children into becoming good Christians. The idea is not quite as absurd as it appears, as the missionaries were obviously keen supporters of the maxim "spare the rod and spoil the child"[18].

The missionaries' attitudes towards sorcery and healing are an illustrative example if we wish to determine where the limit between acceptable and unacceptable traditional customs ran. In most cases sorcery or healing was not a logical problem. *Aatikili* and *oonganga* were considered to be essential carriers of heathen

16 Cf. E.M. Uka's comments about the linkage between the unilineal evolutionary theory and the European missionaries' attitude that African social systems were of no value at all. (Uka, 1989, p. 144.)

17 Hynönen, Erkki, Pakanuuden ja kristillisyyden välinen taistelu avioliitosta Ambomaalla [The battle between heathenism and Christianity over marriage in Ovamboland] & Hengellinen ja siveellinen tila Ambomaan seurakunnissamme [The spiritual and moral situation in our Ovambo parishes]. In Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani Afrikan työalueillemme ja Israeliin 20 kesäkuuta – 20 joulukuuta 1954, Appendices 19 & 33, p. 163, 220, Dga, AELCIN; Minutes of the 5th synod of the Ovambo Church 12–14 May 1931 §5, Nba4, AELCIN; Minutes of the 10th synod of the Ovambo Chrurch 31 Aug. – 2 Sept. 1950 §6, Hha22, AFMS, NAF. See also T. Vapaavuori to M. Tarkkanen 23 Jan. 1933, Eac31 and T. Vapaavuori to K. Himanen 9 Dec. 1947, Eac42, AFMS, NAF; Tarkkanen, Matti, Kertomus Suomen Lähetysseuran lähetysalalle Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1925, p. 47, Dga, AELCIN; Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan ja Okavangon lähetysalueilla pidetyistä tarkastuksista 1946, p. 26, Daac, AELCIN; Laukkanen, Pauli, Ambomaan nuorisotyö [Youth work in Ovamboland] (typescript) 26 June 1958, Serie N, AELCIN.

18 E.g. Pöytäkirjoja tehty tarkastustilaisuuksissa Ambomaalla 1925, p. 47, 57, Dga, AELCIN; Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan ja Okavangon lähetysalueilla pidetyistä tarkastuksista 1946, p. 26, Daac, AELCIN; Kivinen, Walde, Raportti lähetysjohtaja tohtori Uno Paunulle hänen saapuessaan tarkastusmatkalle Ambomaalle 1937, p. 15-16, Hhb2, AFMS, NAF; Varis, 1988, p. 83, 132, 147. ** It is interesting that the whip was sometimes used excessively even in such places as baptismal schools, as Tomas Kalumbu recalled from his youth. The whip is hardly the best way to convince catechumens that their decision to apply for baptism was the right one. (Tomas Kalumbu, interviewed on 19 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga)

culture, and therefore any Christian who resorted to their services was committing a serious offence against the Christian faith and was punished accordingly. But the missionaries had one moral dilemma; should Christians be allowed to seek help from those healers who used herbal medicine for curing? In the 1920s the answer seems to have been negative, and resorting to herbalists was labelled as idolatry.[19] In the next decade a more tolerant attitude was adopted, so that it was acceptable for Christians, particularly those who lived far away from European medical services, to obtain drugs from herbalists provided that no magic of any kind was performed. If magic was included, a Christian seeking help from a herbalist made himself liable to punishment. It is worth noting that at this time Dr. Selma Rainio was inclined to look favourably on herbal medicine and regretted that many Christians believed that it was forbidden to use herbs for curing illnesses.[20] In the 1950s, however, at least the mission director, Tuure Vapaavuori, again appears to have been against allowing Christians to resort to herbalists.[21]

A more detailed analysis of the missionaries' attitudes towards, and arguments against, ohango and the wedding ox will be presented later, but the above examples should show that as pietist Lutherans, the Finnish missionaries had, in general and to a large extent, quite negative attitudes towards the possible preservation of original Ovambo culture[22]; any custom that was considered to have even the slightest connection with "heathenism" was declared "unchristian" and was to be abandoned by Christians. As the missionaries had monopolized the right to define what was unchristian, they usually had no difficulties in declaring a custom unchristian even when it was not objectively so, i.e. not obviously against the teachings of the scriptures. And if all other ways of finding arguments against a custom failed, it was always possible to claim that it led to something which might endanger the Christian way of life. In this respect Native Commissioner Hahn's view of the Finnish missionaries' attitude towards Ovambo culture was quite right:

> "There are of course tribal customs which are in conflict with Christianity and public morals but there are many customs which in no way clash with them, but simply because they are supported by 'heathens' they are considered iniquitous and anti-Christian [by the Finnish missionaries]."[23]

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19 Tarkkanen, Matti, Kertomus Suomen Lähetysseuran lähetysalalle Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1925 [Mission Director's inspection report 1925], p. 14, Dga, AELCIN; Minutes of the general synod of Ovambo parishes 2–3 May 1929 § 9, Hha10, AFMS, NAF.

20 Minutes of the men's days 25–26 Oct. 1933 § 4, Nba4, AELCIN; S. Rainio to U. Paunu 11 Aug. 1936, Eac37, AFMS, NAF. See also O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 25 April 1930, Eac30; Minutes of the parish inspection in Onajena 28 Dec. 1931 (by V. Alho), Hha11; O. Aho's Annual Report 1935 (Tsandi), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 35, Hha14. All in AFMS, NAF.

21 See Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani Afrikan työaloillemme ja Israeliin 20 kesäkuuta – 20 joulukuuta 1954, p. 63–64, Dga, AELCIN.

22 A similar negative attitude which labelled practically everything indigenous as heathen was also prevalent among the Norwegian Lutheran missionaries working in Zululand: "Even apparently neutral aspects of Zulu culture, like dress, living quarters and table manners, were included in the concept of 'heathenism'." (See Simensen & Børhaug & Hernæs & Sønstabø, 1986, p. 197–202. Quote from p. 201.)

23 Copy NCO to the Secretary for SWA 4 April 1933, 6/1/1, NAO, NAN. ** Two years later Hahn wrote that the Finns were too quick and eager to condemn Ovambo customs, and that their main

It is somewhat difficult to compare the Lutheran missionaries' attitudes towards the Ovambo culture with the attitudes of the Anglican and Catholic missionaries in a totally reliable way. The main problem here is the imbalance of sources, in that I have first-hand information only concerning the Finns' attitudes, while my knowledge of the attitudes of the Anglican and Catholic missionaries is based on secondary sources. It is true that the Finns' documents contain some information about the attitudes of the other denominations to Ovambo culture but this information too is second-hand; since they had few personal contacts with either Anglicans or Catholics, their knowledge about what their rivals were doing was mostly based on what their Christians told them. The following comparison is therefore only tentative, but since most of the available information seems to point to one conclusion, I consider its outcome sufficiently reliable.

According to Meredith McKittrick, the practical and local applications of the Lutheran, Anglican and Catholic theologies were virtually identical, and with only minor and temporary exceptions each denomination forbade virtually every form of "traditional" practice that was discovered.[24] This finding is apparently quite correct, at least as far as the Lutheran missionaries were concerned, but I have to disagree with her claim that all denominations had virtually identical approaches to "traditional" practices. As I see it, the Finnish missionaries were less ready than either the Catholics or the Anglicans to allow Ovambo Christians to retain their old customs. This was once pointed out, for example, by Native Commissioner Hahn[25], and Lutheran and Catholic approaches in particular seem to have been different.

The Finnish missionaries had plenty of poisonous comments to make about the Catholic missionaries' ways of attracting adherents. Occasionally it was said that the Catholics baptized people who were still mere heathens, or that at least their requirements for baptism were much lower than those of the Lutherans. Sometimes the Finnish missionaries claimed that "the paters" lured people into their congregations by being very genial and jovial and by claiming that they were less strict than the Lutherans. The Catholics' relaxed attitude to drinking was particularly lamented.[26] Furthermore, every now and then missionaries reported that

endeavour appeared to be to uproot everything native. In 1947 he stated that the Finns had not changed their attitude a bit in this respect (see NCO to the Secretary for SWA 11 Jan. 1935, A489/2, SWAA, NAN; Copy C.H.L. Hahn to Mr Allen s.d. 1947, 2/11, A450, NAN).

24 McKittrick, 1995, p. 273.

25 "Until quite recently, missionaries, especially certain members of the Finnish Missionary Society and their native teachers, thought it part of their duty to destroy and break up everything native and heathen, without being in a position to put anything better in its place". (NCO Annual Report 1938, p. 26, 11/1, NAO, NAN.)

26 S. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 14 Sept. 1931, Eac30; T. Vapaavuori to M. Tarkkanen 23 Jan. 1933, Eac31; O. Aho to K.A. Paasio 4 Oct. 1935, Eac36; K. Himanen to T. Vapaavuori 12 April 1947, Eac42; Mmm 24 Sept. 1924 §2, Hha8; Mmm 3 Sept. 1937 § 46, Hha15; O. Tylväs' Annual Report (Elim) 1927, mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendix 32, Hha10; T. Vapaavuori's Annual Report 1934 (Ombalantu), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 39, Hha13. All in AFMS, NAF. Juva, Mikko, Matkakertomus käynnistä Suomen Lähetysseuran Afrikassa olevilla työaloilla kesällä 1961 [Report of the inspection by the Chairman of the Board of Directors, summer 1961], p. 9, Dga, AELCIN; Kemppainen, 1998, p. 118.

excommunicated Lutheran Christians had transferred to Catholic congregations, where they had been well received.[27] In other words, the Catholics were willing to let outcasts from Lutheran congregations join them. Although the missionaries' comments were obviously partly meant to be used in anti-Catholic propaganda back home, the facts were probably correct, because the Roman Catholics used basically the same claims in their propaganda.[28] Thus, both parties seem to agree that the Lutheran missionaries were less willing to allow "traditional" customs to be retained by Christians and stricter about the following of religious commands. This conclusion is also supported by the recollections of some of McKittrick's informants and by Tötemeyer's findings.[29] The finding is actually not at all surprising, because the Roman Catholic missionaries are said in general to have been more tolerant of African customs than their Protestant brethren.[30]

The difference in attitude between the Lutherans and Anglicans is far less obvious, because Finns actually had quite little to say about the Anglicans. A couple of times they claimed that the Anglicans' requirements for baptism were much lower than theirs,[31] but the general absence of fierce attacks may indicate that Finns did not find their attitudes to the preservation of the indigenous culture quite as objectionable as those of the Roman Catholics. Indeed, when it came to the customs which were clearly related to religion, the Anglicans were quite as strict as the Finns; they too forbade polygyny and girls' initiation rites, for instance.[32] But as far as customs having a less clear connection with religion were concerned, the Anglicans adopted a more tolerant attitude than the Lutherans. For example, they ac-

27 A. Hänninen to M. Tarkkanen 21 May 1933, Eac31; H. Saari to K.A. Paasio 1 June and 1 Aug. 1934, Eac35; O. Aho's Annual Report 1930 (Elim), mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 28, Hha11; O. Aho's Annual Report 1931 (Elim), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 35, Hha11; H. Saari's Annual Report 1934 (Elim), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 31, Hha13; T. Vapaavuori's Annual Report 1934 (Ombalantu), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 39, Hha13. All in AFMS, NAF.

28 In 1930 Father Karl Kress published an article in the Catholic mission organ *Monatsblätter der Oblaten der Unbefleckten Jungfrau Maria*, in which he claimed that many Ovambo had complained to him about the manifold requirements which Finnish missionaries placed on their Christians (see Kemppainen, 1998, p. 142–143). A few years later, in 1934, the Catholic missionary and ethnologist Carlos Estermann, who worked in Angolan Ovamboland, described the Finns' attitude to the Ovambo culture in his article published in *Africa* as "une opposition presque irreductible à la plupart des coutumes indigènes" (an almost unyielding opposition to most of the indigenous customs). (Quoted in Houghton, 1965, p. 17)

29 Tötemeyer, 1978, p. 22–23; McKittrick, 1995, p. 171, 272. Tötemeyer is quite frank, writing about the Finns' aims that "[I]t was absurd to demand that traditional and tried social, economic and political customs should be summarily rejected with the acceptance of Christianity. Mere denunciation, without alternative substitutes, created a vacuum that often seriously endangered existential survival." The Roman Catholics, on the other hand, "have tried harder than the other missionary societies to incorporate much of the traditional culture and its customs into their doctrines. Many animistic practices are not regarded a priori as incompatible with the Christian religion and value-system."

30 Beidelman, 1982, p. 18–19; Hastings, 1994, p. 528, 590; Kirby, 1994, p. 61. For examples of Catholic tolerance, see Sundkler & Steed, 2000, p. 548, 630.

31 A. Hänninen to M. Tarkkanen June 1927, Eac27; Erkki Hynönen's Annual Report 1956 (Uukwanyama), mmm 9–12 Jan. 1957, Appendix 10, Hha28. Both in AFMS, NAF. Juva, Mikko, Matkakertomus käynnistä Suomen Lähetysseuran Afrikassa olevilla työaloilla kesällä 1961, p. 9, Dga, AELCIN.

32 Houghton, 1965, p. 40.

cepted the wedding ox,[33] while the Finns tried to fight against it. Furthermore, they were more tolerant of such things as the wearing of traditional dress, the use of the traditional red skin ointment and the drinking of alcohol.[34] The greater tolerance of the Anglicans is confirmed by the fact that these missionaries occasionally accused the Finns of intolerance, as did Rev. Tobias in 1937, for example:

> "The Finns aim at making as big a cleavage as possible between Christians and their heathen neighbours. Hence the national dress and many customs quite innocuous in themselves are forbidden as savouring of heathenism."[35]

The Finnish missionaries' attitudes to Ovambo culture can also be compared, to some extent, with the general attitudes of European missionaries to African cultures using Steven Kaplan's typology of the Africanization of missionary Christianity as a standard. According to Kaplan, there were six modes of adaptation, apart from out-of-hand rejection, which European missionaries could adopt when defining which African customs were acceptable within a Christian context:

1) **Toleration** prevailed when missionaries agreed to accept the continued existence of certain African social customs even though they maintained that the customs were essentially incompatible with a true Christian life. Such customs were tolerated because they were considered functional necessities for society, so that their abolition would have been either impossible or impracticable. Toleration was exercised when some missionaries were willing to accept polygamy among Christians, for example.
2) **Translation**, which refers to missionaries' attempts to express Christian ideas and concepts in an African idiom.
3) **Assimilation**, cases in which elements from a non-Christian setting were introduced into essentially Christian rituals.
4) **Christianization**, which in Kaplan's typology characterizes cases in which missionaries sought to create Christian versions of traditional African rites and practices. Christianization went beyond mere passive toleration, because it aimed at the adaptation of traditional African rituals so that they became of value to the development of life in a Christian community. In some places, for example, the traditional rites of initiation, usually in some cleansed form, were also accepted as Christian rites of passage.
5) **Acculturation** is Kaplan's term for describing attempts by Western missionaries to preserve features of traditional culture which they felt to be valuable and compatible with the development of Christian spirituality. Acculturation is a more open attitude to African social institutions than tolerance, assimilation or christianization. Proponents of acculturation challenged the accepted ideas of

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33 McKittrick, 1995, p. 172.

34 On Anglican attitudes, see Houghton, 1965, p. 39–40. Attitudes to drinking are discussed in the fifth chapter.

35 Quoted in Houghton, 1965, p. 39. See also other quotations on pages 39 and 40.

Western cultural superiority and the civilizing role of missions, stressing the inherent value of traditional social systems and advocating the general preservation of traditional society.

6) **Incorporation** refers to some missionaries' attempts to Africanize Christianity by introducing and incorporating African elements and concepts into the church as a whole, i.e. into the body of "normative" Christianity.[36]

When Kaplan's typology is compared with the opinions and attitudes of the Finnish missionaries, it is quite obvious that in general the Finns fell short of toleration, but that was apparently a common Lutheran approach[37] . There were some exceptions, though. For example, missionaries occassionally had to tolerate the giving of a wedding ox by Christians because demands for the abolishment of the custom sometimes brought about considerable resistance to the Ovambo Christians.[38] Since assimilation, christianization, acculturation and incorporation reflect a more positive or tolerant attitude towards African culture than toleration, it is logical to conclude that the Finns were not adherents of these ideas, either. Furthermore, there is no evidence in their discussions to suggest that they might have been willing to act in any of these ways, nor can I think of any examples of their actions which would fit neatly into any of these categories. Acculturation is rather tricky, though, because it includes so many aspects. As the next sub-chapter will show, the missionaries were somewhat uncertain about whether or not they were on a civilizing mission, and therefore they could be seen in some sense as acculturationists. But because they were firm believers in Western cultural superiority, and were definitely not advocating the general preservation of traditional society, their work also seems to lack an acculturative aim. Then there is translation, which the missionaries accepted and used. The best known example of this is the fact that the word *Kalunga* was also accepted as the name for the Christian god. Translation of this kind was necessary if missionaries wanted to make their message understood by Africans, and therefore, as Kaplan also notes[39] , it would be a mistake to take translation as evidence of the missionaries' tolerance of African culture.

Although the Finnish missionaries were inclined to reject many Ovambo customs, even they, naturally, did not oppose all aspects. If a custom or practise was clearly not connected with religion in any way, it could be, and should be, preserved. A minor debate concerning drawing is a rather amusing example of this. The mission director, Tarkkanen, suggested in 1922 that geometrical drawing with a ruler should be taught at the Oniipa teacher training school, but the headmaster of the school, Nestori Wäänänen, was opposed to the idea. Not only did he consider geometry a useless subject, but he also pointed out that the Ovambo culture was predominantly based on round forms. In Wäänänen's opinion, "round cultures" could

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36 Kaplan, 1986, p. 166–183.

37 The Norwegian missionaries working in Zululand also had a clearly spelled maxim that "no heathen custom must be tolerated" (see Simensen & Børhaug & Hernæs & Sønstebø, 1986, p. 236).

38 See the fifth chapter.

39 Kaplan, 1986, p. 172.

not be deemed to be more primitive than those based on straight lines, and therefore the Ovambo had a right to develop their own culture to greater perfection in this respect.[40] But more seriously; apart from this kind of liberal approach, missionaries could occasionally adopt quite liberal attitudes towards customs which had links to religion too. This can be seen in their views concerning the Christians' right to use indigenous first names.

Until the beginning of the 1960s European and Biblical first names were dominant among Ovambo Christians.[41] This means that converts usually took a non-indigenous name when they were baptized, and that Christians predominantly gave their children European or Biblical names. This was not because the missionaries demanded that they should use alien names, but because they chose to do so. In fact, even at the very beginning of the twentieth century some missionaries advocated the wider use of indigenous names among Christians.[42] When the Finns came to the conclusion in the mid-1930s that some people were converting to Christianity just in order to acquire a non-indigenous name, they decided to further advocate that Ovambo names should also be deemed acceptable for Christians providing that they did not include "any heathen magic".[43] In this respect the Finns were fairly broad-minded,[44] because a new name, as an outward symbol of a new religious affiliation, was regarded as a religious matter. But their reservation concerning heathen magic leads us back to the conclusion that even when being broad-minded the Finns would not allow the Christians to retain anything which was even slightly connected with the original Ovambo religion. It is also worth noting that the missionaries' decision to allow indigenous names was not an act that would fit into Kaplan's category of acculturation. It is true that it showed a willingness to preserve a feature of the traditional culture, but it deviated from the principles of acculturation for two reasons. Firstly, the decision fell short even of toleration because no names containing references to heathenism were allowed, and secondly, it was not based on the idea that the preservation of indigenous names was valuable *per se*, but was simply meant as a means of stopping people converting for "false" reasons. To put it simply, even when the Finnish missionaries were being more broad-minded, they were not being tolerant.

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40 N. Wäänänen to M. Tarkkanen 23 Oct. and 8 Dec. 1922, Eac23, AFMS, NAF.

41 Saarelma-Maunumaa, 1997, p. 231–233; Saarelma-Maunumaa, 2003, p. 304–307.

42 Saarelma-Maunumaa, 1997, p. 68–70, 74–75; Saarelma-Maunumaa, 2003, p. 142–143.

43 Mmm 31 Aug. 1937 §26, Hha15, AFMS, NAF.

44 I have no comprehensive information on European missionaries' general attitudes to the use of indigenous names by Christians. It would seem, however, that some denominations demanded that converts adopted non-indigenous names while some others just expected them to do so (see Beidelman, 1982, p. 139; Simensen & Børhaug & Hernæs & Sønstabø, 1986, p. 210; Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 219; Saarelma- Maunumaa, 1997, p. 31–32). As regards indigenous names the Finns seem to have been more broad-minded than the Roman Catholics, as that church accepted baptism with indigenous names only after 1971 (see Byaruhanga-Akiiki, 1993, p. 188).

what was to be created instead...

The missionaries' main aim was naturally to make the people Christians, and preferably good ones. But what was their conception of a good Christian like? Varis defined the missionaries' aim as a Christian with a Christian consciousness, a person with a Christian conscience and a sense of contrition who knows the difference between good and evil and who has thus developed a Christian feeling of shame and guilt.[45] This is a good answer, but we can elaborate on it a little. Let us start from the reverse concept, by looking at what good Christians were not supposed to do.

The 1924 regulations of the Ovamboland Lutheran Church, which served as the first general constitution for the FMS parishes, had (unlike later regulations) exact stipulations about what punishment was to be imposed on Christians who committed particular offences. Thus the first-instance punishments[46] for various offences, from petty to serious, were as follows:

1) A warning from any member of the congregation: drinking beer or alcohol, petty larceny, spending the night away from home without proper reason, lesbianism, masturbation, bestiality, slandering, lying, deceit, pride, quarrelsomeness, cruelty to animals, greed, profiteering, laziness, disobedience to parents, eating sacrificial meat, practising minor magic, being present when minor magic was being practised, seeking help from heathen healers, absence from divine service, neglecting prayers, failing to keep the Sabbath, failing to help one's neighbour, spreading heretical views and improper uttering of God's name.
2) A warning from the local missionary: practising magic, using the services of a sorcerer, assisting in ohango, being present in ohango, allowing an unchristian way of life in one's home, marital violence and allowing or promoting indecency or fornication.
3) A public warning in front of the congregation and/or exclusion from Holy Communion: grand larceny, robbery, demanding a wedding ox, illegal occupation of somebody's field, illicit (pre-marital) intercourse, adultery and male homosexual intercourse.
4) Excommunication: returning to heathenism, murder, arson, abortion, allowing one's wife to have sexual intercourse with another man, participation in ohango, forcing a girl to participate in ohango, abandonment of one's spouse without permission from the church administration, polygyny and becoming a concubine to a polygynist.[47]

The above rules have so many "thou shalt nots" that obviously nobody could meet up to each and every standard for a good Christian. What the rules clearly show is

45 Varis, 1988, p. 55–56, 189.

46 If a person who had committed an offence and had received the first-instance punishment, did not correct his or her behaviour, a more severe punishment could be imposed. This progression could be continued, at least in theory, up to the ultimate punishment of excommunication.

47 Ambomaan evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon järjestyssäännöt 1924 [Regulations of the Ovamboland Lutheran Church 1924], §47–51, Hhc2, AFMS, NAF.

that the missionaries were keen to control the Christians' sexuality. Only intercourse with one's spouse within a monogamous marriage was allowed. All other forms of sexual satisfaction were forbidden, and in most cases sexual transgressions were considered serious offences. As such this is not surprising, and the rules were obviously well in line with those of most other mission churches in this respect. The only surprising thing is actually how insignificant an offence bestiality was considered to be. Nevertheless, the disciplinary rules show that one important characteristic of a good Christian was that he or she was chaste. Two other important characteristics, references to which can be found in the missionaries' correspondence as well as in the regulations, were orthodoxy and humbleness.

A good Christian was Lutheran, in the same way as his or her coreligionist in Finland was, and the pure Lutheran doctrine had to be preached and adopted, so that there was no room for syncretism. This conclusion can already be drawn from the evidence given in the previous sub-chapter, about the disapproving attitude of the Finnish missionaries to the preservation of the Ovambo culture in a Christian context. It is therefore understandable that orthodox Finnish Lutheranism was also embedded in the constitutions of the Ovamboland Lutheran Church, which declared its status as a daughter of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and therefore obliged it to adopt the latter's confession of faith.[48] The missionaries' opposition to syncretic ideas also became evident in the post-war period, when the problem of "neo-paganism" emerged. Missionaries in the 1940s and 1950s in particular were worried about what they saw as Christians' increased interest in heathen customs and their attempts to "smuggle" heathen practices into the congregations.[49] Fear of the spread of syncretism was obviously the reason why Vapaavuori, as mission director, constantly reminded Ovambo Christians during his inspection visit to Ovamboland in 1946 that they should always make an absolutely clear distinction in their minds between Christian and heathen practices.[50] Furthermore, concern for furnishing advocates of syncretism with arguments may have been one reason why the Oshindonga translation of the Old Testament was not published until 1954, more than thirty years after the translation work had been completed,[51] as the

48 Ambomaan evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon järjestyssäännöt 1924 §1 and 1929/1938 §1, Hhc2, AFMS, NAF.

49 On warnings about neo-paganism, see K. Petäjä to T. Vapaavuori 10 Dec. 1951, Eac45; E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 21 Sept. 1959, Eac48; O. Makkonen's Annual Report 1945 (Onandjokwe) & H. Saari's Annual Report 1945 (Oshigambo–Oshitaji), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1946, Appendices 13 and 14, Hha20; H. Saari's Annual Report 1946 (Oshigambo–Oshitaji), mmm 22–23 Jan. 1947, Appendix 13, Hha21. Minutes of the 10th synod 31 Aug. – 2 Sept. 1950, §5, Hha22; Minutes of the church administration 5 Oct. 1956 §7, Hha27. All in AFMS, NAF. Minutes of the synod 16–17 Aug. 1934 §4, Nba4, AELCIN; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani.... 20 kesäkuuta – 20 joulukuuta 1954, p. 63–65, 215–217, Dga, AELCIN. On syncretism as an undesirable phenomenon, see Mmm 16 Jan. 1918, Appendix 37, Hha7; Mmm 24–27 Aug. 1954 §6, Hha25; Minutes of the field administration board 29 April 1960, Appendix 1, Hha31. All in AFMS, NAF; Juva, Mikko, Matkakertomus käynnistä Suomem Lähetysseuran Afrikassa olevilla työaloilla kesällä 1961, p. 7–8, Dga, AELCIN.

50 Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan ja Okavangon lähetysalueilla pidetyistä tarkastuksista 1946, passim., Daac, AELCIN.

51 Peltola, 1958, p. 187, 241.

missionaries had apparently noticed that it contained many stories which could have been used to defend the preservation of indigenous customs branded as heathen.[52]

A good Christian was humble, and it was always worth reporting to Helsinki when Ovambo Christians (whether pupils, pastors or royals) behaved in a properly humble manner.[53] Not only was one's behaviour required to be humble, but also one's outer appearance, i.e. one was expected to wear decent[54], modest clothes. This latter requirement is evident in the early 20th-century principle that the clothes which Finnish Christians sent to Africans were expected not to be "decorated ones"[55]. Similarly adornment, "the use of trinkets", was something which Christians should avoid. Thus the mission director, Matti Tarkkanen, suggested in 1929 that missionaries should ask the management of the Ondonga Trading Company store[56] not to sell any adornments or ornaments to the Ovambo. Although the field administration board and the presiding missionary, Viktor Alho, agreed that missionaries were to preach against the passion for showing off, they felt that there were a couple of reasons why they could not carry out Tarkkanen's suggestion, nor start punishing women who adorned themselves. Firstly, the missionaries were afraid that such an action might endanger the grant from the "mining company" towards the FMS medical work, and secondly, Alho pointed out that the missionaries themselves bought goods from the Ovambo by using beads as payment, so that any stern action against women's adornments would not only have been hypocritical, but might also have increased the prices of such goods.[57] Unlike Alho, the mission director, Tuure Vapaavuori, did not hesitate to preach strongly against adornments during his inspection visit in 1946. He wanted to forbid women to wear jewels of any kind and claimed that necklaces were "stones which

52 See Peltola, 1961, p. 47–51, 83; Varis, 1988, p. 64, note 30. ** Viktor Alho once noted that the Old Testament had references to customs which were dangerously similar to the Ovambo wedding ox (see Alho, Viktor, Häähärkä amboseurakunnissa, mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 23b, Hha8, AFMS, NAF).

53 E.g. O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 29 Sept. 1930, Eac30; A. Mutanen to U. Paunu 7 April 1938, Eac38; L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori and V. Kivinen 23 Jan. 1953, Eac45; I. Saukkonen's Annual Report 1930 (Ongwediva), mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 25, Hha11; H. Haapanen's Annual Report 1941 (Oshigambo girls' school), mmm 21–22 Jan. 1942, Appendix 20, Hha19; B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1952 (Southern Ondonga), mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendix 3, Hha24. All in AFMS, NAF.

54 The arguments used by the missionaries when demanding that Christians must wear shirts and trousers or frocks were not at all surprising. Firstly, many of them saw a direct connection between the way of dressing and sexual behaviour, and therefore claimed that the indigenous dress, or pagan nakedness as they put it, was a cause of immorality. Interestingly enough, such a link was denied by the assistant mission director, Hannu Haahti, in the1910s. He preferred the second argument, that European clothing was more hygienic and therefore better for one's health than indigenous dress. (See e.g. V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 3 Feb. 1928,Eac28; V. Alho's Annual Report 1932 [General report], mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendix1, Hha12. Both in AFMS, NAF; Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 26, Lb, AELCIN; Tarkkanen, Matti, Kertomus Suomen Lähetysseuran... tarkastusmatkasta 1925, p. 44, Dga, AELCIN.)

55 Mmm 22 Sept. 1911 §7, Hha6, AFMS, NAF.

56 The Ondonga Trading Company, owned by Consolidated Diamond Mines, opened the first store in Ovamboland in 1925. (See NCO Annual Report 1928, p. 12, 11/1, NAO, NAN; N CO Annual Report 1939, p. 32, 2/18, A450, NAN.)

57 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 13 Oct. 1929, Eac29, AFMS, NAF.

Young Christian men of the parish of Onayena with the missionary Erkki Lehto in the late 1910s. This picture propagates the missionaries' ideal of what Ovambo Christians should have been like, i.e. decently dressed, orderly and under the benevolent supervision of a missionary. (Photo by courtesy of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission)

drag people down to hell". He also reprimanded the young "rascals" who wore sun glasses and had several pens in their shirt pocket.[58]

The corollary of the demand for humbleness was the missionaries' fear that the Christians, and members of the Christian elite in particular, might become proud. In the late 1930s the presiding missionary, Walde Kivinen, strongly criticized his colleagues for their excessive fear of finding pride among the Ovambo. According to him, most missionaries took any sign of an Ovambo doing anything on his or her own initiative as a token of unacceptable pride, so that they wanted to make all the decisions themselves, leaving the Ovambo, particularly the pastors, just to play the role of dependent "yes-men". Kivinen felt that the missionaries' fear of pride had reached such a disproportionate level that it was now hampering their work.

58 Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan... tarkastuksista 1946, p. 18, 27, 29, 34, 39, 41, Daac, AELCIN. Vapaavuori also used strong words against "dandies" after his next inspection visit in 1954 (see Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 64, Dga, AELCIN).

Not only had it made the Ovambo unenterprising, but it also had led to the removal of many talented individuals who could have served their people.[59] Commenting on Kivinen's views, Saukkonen agreed that there was a need to give the Ovambo pastors a more independent role, but it had to be done very carefully. He was convinced that the Africans were "extremely inclined towards pride", and giving the Ovambo pastors more independence might therefore even make them impudent.[60]

Kivinen was a man of firm opinions and a sharp tongue, but his comments on the missionaries' fear of making the Africans proud are basically correct. A couple of examples will be sufficient to prove the point. At the beginning of the 20th century the missionaries began appointing reliable Christians as parish elders to help them supervise the parishioners' morals. There was no inauguration ceremony of any kind, though, because the missionaries were afraid that this might have "endangered the elders' spiritual life".[61] In other words, they feared that inauguration might have made the elders proud. A few years later the missionary Liljeblad expressed his firm opinion that missionaries should never show the Christian Ovambo their appreciation for anything which Africans might have done well. He was convinced that any African to whom a European showed appreciation was bound to do something which proved that this appreciation had been premature. Although Liljeblad's wording is somewhat obscure, the context suggests that he was afraid that showing one's appreciation would make the African counterpart proud.[62] Even after World War II the tone was same. In 1953 the presiding missionary Eriksson and the missionary Hatakka, headmaster of the Oniipa teacher training school, referred to some Ovambo teachers as "those pitiful tie-and-pen intellectuals who think that they are too good to sweep the floor".[63]

The missionaries' fear of making the Africans proud stemmed from their idea that these people were childlike. As Kirsti Kena has pointed out, they treated the Ovambo in the same way as parents in early twentieth-century Finland were expected to bring up their children. According to the dominant pedagogical principles of the time, parents were not expected to show their appreciation for anything their children did, because that was believed to make the children proud or conceited.[64]

The aim of the missionaries' christianizing work was to make the Ovambo good Lutherans, i.e. free of vice, orthodox and humble. But were the Finns also on a

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59 W. Kivinen to K. A. Paasio 9 April 1935 and to U. Paunu 31 July 1936, 2 July 1938 & 22 Aug. 1938, Eac36–38, AFMS, NAF.

60 I. Saukkonen to U. Paunu 23 April 1936, Eac37, AFMS, NAF.

61 Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912 [Report on the inspection visit to Ovamboland], p. 7-8, Lb, AELCIN.

62 E. Liljeblad's Annual Report 1919 (Oniipa and Uukwanyama), mmm 13 Jan. 1920, unnumbered appendix, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.

63 Copy B. Eriksson to T. Vapaavuori 20 Dec. 1953, serie N, AELCIN; E. Y. Hatakka to T. Vapaavuori 20 Dec. 1953, Eac45, AFMS, NAF. For further examples of the fear of pride, see Kena, 2000, p. 216, 247, 294–295, 297.

64 Kena, 2000, p. 296–297.

civilizing mission? This is a tricky question. If civilization is considered to be synonymous with the Christian faith, as some missionaries seem to have thought, then the answer should obviously be in the affirmative. But if the word "civilizing" is used to describe an activity which aims at spreading secular knowledge of Western culture to Africans, then the answer is a much more complex one, because the missionaries had various opinions on whether such an activity was part of their calling. Generally speaking, it can be said that civilizing was always considered less important than evangelization, especially in the case of the older-generation missionaries such as Martti Rautanen or Viktor Alho. The latter actually once wrote quite verbosely about the missionaries' civilizing role maintaining that their duty was to spread God's message but not Western cultural or social virtues. "It is salvation that the world needs, not some higher culture"[65] , he summarized his views.

In practice the mission schools, especially the higher educational institutions since the 1930s, did spread western secular knowledge and ideas, because such subjects as mathematics, geography, foreign language, hygiene and handicrafts were taught, but it is worth noting that this was not entirely because the missionaries wanted their schools to offer predominantly secular education but because from the 1920s on the colonial government was able to press them into adopting its priorities regarding African education.[66] The first step in this respect was taken in 1926, when the territorial restrictions on the work of various mission organizations in Ovamboland were abolished and all denominations were allowed to work in all communities, providing, among other things, that the bulk of the education they offered was of a practical nature and that the curricula were decided upon after consultation with the SWA educational authorities.[67] At the same time government involvement in African education was strengthened with the introduction of government grants-in-aid to mission schools.[68] When the Finnish missionaries decided in the mid-1920s to apply for government grants, they faced a dilemma; they all agreed that government aid was needed but some voiced concern that the grants would give the government too much say concerning curricula, and thus endanger religious instruction in the FMS schools.[69] These concerns were not to-

65 Alho, Viktor, Lähetystyö ja sivistys Ambolähetyksen näkökulmasta katsottuna [Mission work and civilization as seen from the point of view of the Ovambo mission], 20 April 1934, Hha12, AFMS, NAF. For other comments which clearly state that civilizing was not regarded to be the duty of missionaries, or was a very secondary aim, see M. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 24 Feb. and 14 July 1924, Eac2; A. Järvinen to K.A. Paasio 23 March 1922, Eac23; Mmm 10 Nov. 1924 §1, Hha8. All in AFMS, NAF. On Martti Rautanen's views of missionaries' aims, see also Rautanen, 1902, p. 1 and Kena, 2000, p. 177–181, 215–216.

66 The main difference between the educational policies of the government and the mission was, as the missionaries saw it, that the government emphasized practical vocational training while the missionaries prioritized moral education and had a somewhat more theoretical educational approach. (See e.g. E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 1 April 1929 and W. Kivinen to M. Tarkkanen 14 July 1929, Eac29, AFMS, NAF.)

67 Office of the Administrator to the Presiding Missionary of the FMS 24 March 1927, Eaj, AELCIN.

68 On the development of "native" education policy in SWA in general in the 1920s, and on government grants, see Harlech-Jones, 1986, p. 25; Cohen, 1994, p. 83–87.

69 E.g. V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 7 April 1926 and 16 July 1926, Eac26; N. Wäänänen to M. Tarkkanen 17 Aug. 1928, Eac28; E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 30 Aug. 1928, Eac28; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 20 April 1929 and 13 Oct. 1929, Eac29; Minutes of the School Committee 8 July 1926 §2, Hha9. All in

tally unfounded, for after the SWA administration had begun subsidizing the Oniipa teacher training school in 1929[70] a new curriculum was drawn up to meet the government requirements. Although initially opposed by the board of directors, the curriculum was finally approved in 1931. It laid emphasis on teaching crafts and subjects such as Afrikaans and writing, while religious studies made up less than 20 per cent of the total lessons, as compared with 30 to 50 per cent in the 1920s.[71] A similar process of adjusting curricula to meet government requirements took place in the boys' and girls' schools in the late 1930s, and in primary schools from the late 1930s onwards.[72] Not all the missionaries were happy with such developments, and some voices were raised to demand that the FMS should have founded distinct "schools of religion" in which religious tuition could have been given without government interference.[73]

Although the emergence of a "civilizing aspect" in mission schools was partly due to government pressure and was opposed by many missionaries, it does not mean that all of them were opposed to the idea that it was also the missionaries' duty to spread suitable aspects of Western secular knowledge. In fact, there were two groups of missionaries in this respect, the "christianizers", usually older mis-

AFMS, NAF. ** Not all the missionaries were worried about the consequences of the government regulations, however. Antti Perheentupa, for example, was strongly in favour of applying for government grants, because government involvement would force the FMS to modernize its schools. Erkki Lehto, headmaster of the Oniipa teacher training school, shared Perheentupa's view, and even went further. He felt that government involvement was bound to be beneficial because it would end the "long-drawn-out harping on nothing but religion" which was customary in FMS schools. (See A. Perheentupa to M. Tarkkanen 28 Nov. 1924 and 28 dec. 1926, Eac24&26; E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 10 Jan. 1929, Eac29. All in AFMS, NAF.)

70 Private secretary of the Administrator to V. Alho 17 July 1929, Eaj, AELCIN.

71 The percentages for the 1920s are only tentative, because the curricula of the Oniipa school were not presented in a standardized way in the annual reports. On the new curriculum, see Lehto, Erkki, Oniipan seminaarin uuden kurssin lukusuunnitelmasta vähäsen [A little about the new Oniipa curriculum], s.d. but 1930, Hha11; Minutes of the school committee 13 Jan. 1931 §4, Hha11; E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 25 Jan. 1930 and 13 Feb. 1930, Eac30; Lehto, Erkki, Vastaus veli N. Wäänäsen lausuntoon Ambomaan opettajaseminaarin työsuunnitelmasta [Answer to brother N.W. concerning the new curriculum of the teacher training school] 7 Aug. 1930, Eac30. All in AFMS, NAF. Rapport aangebied deur die Regering van die Unie van Suid Afrika... 1937, UG 25/ 1938, p. 147. ** There is one small but interesting example of how much the wishes of the SWA administration began influencing the teaching in FMS schools. In 1936 the SWA Director of Education, Wilhelm Orban, on inspecting the FMS schools in Ovamboland, complained that no history was taught at the Oniipa teacher training school. The outcome was that 45 minutes of history a week had been added to the curriculum by 1938. (See Extracts from a report by the Director of Education Wilh. Orban on his visit to Okavango 6–12 June 1936 and Ovamboland 15–23 June 1936, p. 2, Eaj, AELCIN; Frey, Carl [Untitled report to the Director of Education on the inspection of mission schools in Ovamboland], 1938, p. 13, Rara/0019, Library of NAN.)

72 E.g. V. Alho to U. Paunu 21 Sept 1938, Eac38; S. Hirvonen to U. Paunu 29 Dec. 1938, Eac38; E. Lehto to U. Paunu 27 Feb. 1938, Eac38; K. Harjanne to U. Paunu 9 May 1939, Eac39; A. Mutanen to U. Paunu 3 April 1939, Eac39; B. Eriksson to U. Paunu 16 Sept. 1945, Eac41; E. Lehto to U. Paunu 14 Aug. 1945, Eac41; Minutes of the School Committee 25 Nov. 1937, Appendix 4, Hha15. H. Kupila's Annual Report 1938 (Ondonga schools), mmm 22–23 Feb. 1939, unnumbered appendix, Hha17; Minutes of the School Committee 23 Feb. 1939 §5 and 1 June 1939, appendices, Hha17; Mmm 17–18 Jan. 1945 §9, Hha20. All in AFMS, NAF. Frey, 1938, p. 6–7, 15–16, Rara/0019, Library of NAN; Lehtonen, 1999, p. 105–106, 108–109.

73 Mmm 26–28 Aug. 1937 §4 and Appendix 2a, Hha15, AFMS, NAF.

sionaries engaged in parish work who embraced the narrower missiological view that their exclusive, or at least definitely predominant, duty was to save souls, and the "civilizers", chiefly younger missionaries engaged in school work who felt that they were also obliged to uplift the Africans by passing advanced Western secular knowledge on to them. The conflicting ideas of these groups occasionally led to heated debates about the aims of mission schools, the first major round taking place in the late 1910s and the second in the early 1930s.

The first round centred upon the newly established Oniipa school and the teacher training provided by it. The issue under discussion was what kind of teachers were needed in mission schools and what subjects they were to teach. The christianizers were personified in the elderly Martti Rautanen, who was presiding missionary up to 1920. In his view, the aim of the schools was first to bring people to the Word and then to build proper Christian characters. Knowledge without strict morals based on the Bible was not only useless but also harmful. Therefore, the main aim of teacher training was to ensure that Ovambo teachers became devoted Christians.[74] The civilizers, led by Emil Liljeblad, headmaster of the Oniipa school, and Anna Glad, the school inspector, agreed that proselytism and the building of a Christian character were the main aims, but they also claimed that it was essential to dispense secular knowledge and instruction in practical matters if these aims were to be achieved. It is rather interesting that not even the civilizers maintained that adopting Western ideas or know-how could have been of value *per se* to the Africans, but they claimed that practical and academic training was needed so that some of the duties which were being performed by missionaries could be handed over to Africans. Thus ultimately, secular education was needed because otherwise there would never emerge a knowledgeable Christian elite who, at some distant time in the future, could take over the leadership of the Ovambo Church. The civilizers also pointed out that exclusive concentration on building a Christian character would simply produce narrow-minded and incapable teachers who, instead of bringing people to the Word, would drive the heathens away from it.[75]

During the second round the christianizers, including the presiding missionary at the time, Viktor Alho, and the mission director, Matti Tarkkanen, had very little new to say. Their views on the aims of the schools were unchanged and they argued that religious teaching in schools had been neglected because of secular subjects. They also complained that priority and resources had been assigned to school work in general to such an extent that it was already threatening the evangelization work.[76] If the christianizers were not very innovative in their arguments,

74 M. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 21 May 1914, 3 Sept. 1917, 5 Feb. 1918, 26 Nov. 1918, 20 Sept. 1921, 24 Feb. 1924, 14 July 1924, Eac2; Mmm 20 Aug. 1917 §1, Hha7. All in AFMS, NAF. See also the 1903 quotation from Rautanen in Varis, 1988, p.76.

75 A. Glad to M. Tarkkanen 10 May 1917 and 15 Aug. 1918, Eac20-21; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 19 July 1917 and 25 Sept. 1917, Eac20; K. J. Petäjä to M. Tarkkanen 15 April 1917, Eac20; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 7 Dec. 1919 and to H. Haahti 6 July 1920, Eac21–22; A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 7 June 1920, Eac22; Mmm 20 Aug. 1917 §1, Hha7. All in AFMS, NAF.

76 E.g. V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 20 April 1929, 16 Jan. 1932 and 13 Oct. 1932, Eac29,31; V. Alho to K. A. Paasio 20 Aug. 1934 and 25 Oct. 1934, Eac35; W. Kivinen to M. Tarkkanen 10 Feb 1930, Eac30; W. Björklund to M. Tarkkanen 20 July 1933, Eac31; I. Saukkonen to M. Tarkkanen 25 June 1933,

the same can be said of the civilizers. They maintained that schools with secular subjects were needed not only to bring people to the Word but also in order to allow the Christians to understand the message of the Gospels correctly.[77] There was one new element, however. When Erkki Lehto gave reasons why mission schools should teach Afrikaans instead of English as a foreign language, he wrote that it was the only foreign language which the missionaries could teach well enough to give the Ovambo the language proficiency they needed in their contacts with Europeans, particularly when they were on labour contracts.[78] Thus Lehto was braking away from the tradition of justifying secular education merely as a means of advancing the evangelization work and was claiming that it would be valuable to pass some aspects of Western culture on to the Africans because they would need these things in order to cope with the "modern" world, i.e. "civilizing" the Africans was a valuable aim *per se*. Or at least, civilizing them in the proper way was; Lehto continued to promote the missionaries' civilizing duties in the late 1930s by saying that (secular) civilization was what Africans wanted, and if it was not provided by the missionaries, the Ovambo would seek it from other sources, sources that would corrupt their Christianity.[79]

After World War II the christianizers were worried about the ever-increasing government involvement in school work, which, as they felt, had turned the mission schools into "culture schools". As such schools did not serve the purpose of evangelization but instead detracted from its resources, it was best to hand them over to the government, so that the missionaries could concentrate on evangelization.[80] As far as the civilizers were concerned, they did not say much on this score

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Eac31; H. Saari to K.A. Paasio 1 June 1934, Eac35; Tarkkanen, Matti, Promemoria sen tarkastuksen johdosta, jonka W. Orban, Director of Education, teki Ambomaalle ja Okavangolle kesäkuussa 1936 [Memorandum on the school inspection report by W. Orban], s.d., Eac37; Alho, Viktor, Lähetystyö ja sivistys Ambolähetyksen näkökulmasta katsottuna, 20 April 1934, Hha12. All in AFMS, NAF.

77 E.g. W. Kivinen to M. Tarkkanen 10 Feb. 1930, Eac30; E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 17 May 1933, Eac31; E. Lehto to K.A. Paasio 22 July 1934, Eac35; J. Syrjä to K.A. Paasio 20 March 1934, Eac35; I. Saukkonen to V. Alho 28 March 1935, Eac36; Lehto, Erkki, Ambolähetyksen koulutyön edelleen kehittäminen [The future development of schools in Ovamboland], 2 March 1934, Hha12. All in AFMS, NAF.

78 E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 25 Jan. 1930; Oniipan seminaarin lukusuunnitelma-ehdotus 1932–1934 [Proposal for the curriculum of the Oniipa teacher training school for 1932 to 1934], s.d. Both in Eac30, AFMS, NAF. ** Viktor Alho's views were contrary to Lehto's. He was against teaching foreign languages in mission schools and claimed that an ability to speak Afrikaans would bring the Ovambo into closer contact with the rest of the SWA population and with the inhabitants of the Union, and that would be dangerous because it was bound to spread the immorality and religious nonchalance of the south to Ovamboland (see Alho, Viktor, Lähetystyö ja sivistys... 20 April 1934, Hha12, AFMS, NAF).

79 Lehto, Erkki, Ambolähetyksen tulevaisuus [the future of the Ovambo mission], s.d. (late 1930s), p. 4, Hhb2, AFMS, NAF.

80 E.g. K. Petäjä to T. Vapaavuori 12 Jan. 1948, Eac43; Copy B. Eriksson to D.R. Rootman 10 Sept. 1953, Eac45; E.Y. Hatakka to T. Vapaavuori 20 Dec. 1953, Eac45; A.W. Björklund's Annual Report 1947 (Uukwanyama), mmm 8–9 Jan. 1948, Apendix 18, Hha21; Liina Lindström's untitled report 1955, Hha26 loose leaves; E.Y. Hatakka's Annual Report 1955 (Ongwediva teacher training school), mmm 10–12 Jan. 1956, Appendix 39, Hha27. All in AFMS, NAF. B. Eriksson to T. Vapaavuori 20 Dec. 1953, Serie N, AELCIN; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani...1954, p. 80, Dga, AELCIN.

but what they did have to say seems to indicate that by that time the "civilizing" idea had matured into a "purebred" form in which the spreading of Western ideas and knowledge was no longer seen just as a means of evangelization, but as something which should be done because it was in accordance with people's needs. This was evident in the 1954 school development plan, which stated that one aim of the mission schools was to give the Ovambo knowledge which would help them to develop themselves further or to obtain better jobs in the south.[81] The same idea can also be found in statements made by some of the missionaries, who claimed that it was their duty to educate a Christian-minded, knowledgeable and responsible Ovambo elite who could one day lead their people.[82] No longer were the missionaries solely interested in educating helpers for the evangelization work; now they were also training leaders for the people as a whole.

All in all, the civilizing aspect of the missionaries' work was not self-evident, if civilizing is defined as passing Western secular knowledge on to the Africans. There were missionaries who saw this as lying totally outside the scope of the missionaries' duties, while others were prepared to undertake a civilizing mission provided that it served the primary aim of evangelization. It was only from the 1930s onwards, and especially after World War II, that the idea of civilizing as an independent value entered into the missionaries' arguments. But even when the Finnish missionaries were educating the Africans in Western secular matters, they were definitely not aiming at assimilation. As the next sub-chapter shows, they felt that the Western culture had many elements which could be considered anti-Christian and a danger to Christian character building and morals. It is therefore obvious that they were not willing to act in a manner that would "Westernize" or "Europeanize" the Ovambo. They clearly stated this several times by emphasizing that their aim was not to make the Ovambo into "black Europeans".[83]

...and by what means

Conversion was an important step on the way to Christianity, but it was not the only one. Christians were expected after conversion to deepen their faith, or at least to avoid sliding back to heathenism or sin. Conversion is the topic of the next chapter, but it is important at this point to take a look at the means used by mis-

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81 Laajennetun koulukomitean suunnitelma ambokoulujen ja -opettajien kehittämiseksi [Plan for the further development of Ovambo schools and teachers], Minutes of the field administration board 17 June 1954, §12 Appendix 2, Hha25, AFMS, NAF.

82 Copy W. Kivinen to E. Pentti 6 Nov. 1952, Hha23; Copy O. Vuorela to A. Hukka 13 April 1962, Eac49; Minutes of the field administration board 20 Aug. 1964 §5, Hha35; L. Lehtonen, the annual report of the Oshigambo secondary school 1964, Mmm 26 Feb. – 1 March 1965, Hha36. All in AFMS, NAF. Kivinen, Walde, Raportti allekirjoittaneen matkasta Afrikan sihteerinä Ambomaalle 1949–1950, p. 8–9, 18, Dgb, AELCIN.

83 E.g. A. Glad to M. Tarkkanen 20 April 1914, Eac19; S. Hirvonen to M. Tarkkanen 16 Aug. 1918, Eac21; M. Anttila to M. Tarkkanen 11 Nov. 1932, Eac31; W. Kivinen to K.A. Saarilahti 2–6 Oct. 1935, Eac36; Mmm 28 Nov. 1911 §17, Hha6; E. Liljeblad's statement to the board of directors, Mmm 24 Feb. 1919, §2 Appendix 1, Hha7. All in AFMS, NAF. A. Hukka to S. Kyllönen and B. Eriksson 17 July 1956, Series N, AELCIN.

sionaries to try to make the Christians more Christian, or to keep them from returning to heathenism. Some of the main means used were isolation, surveillance (combined with punishments when necessary) and preaching about the fire of hell.

The Christians had to be isolated from sources of temptations and sin because they were considered to be weak and open to harmful influences. This meant, in the first place, that they had to be isolated from the heathens and their customs. Both Meredith McKittrick and Emmanuel Kreike found that the Ovambo Christians had a tendency to separate themselves from their heathen compatriots. This was so clear in Uukwanyama in the 1930s that, in Kreike's words, it was "almost as if they had a different ethnic identity". Concerning the origins of such separation, McKittrick pointed out that it was not entirely caused by the missionaries ordering it, as Charles Mallory has claimed, but the Ovambo Christians played a key role themselves in constructing a sense of separateness.[84] I agree with McKittrick that the separation between Christians and heathens probably occurred partly because the Christians themselves wanted it[85], but I would further claim that the distinction between separation as ordered by the missionaries and separation dictated by the free will of the Christians is somewhat irrelevant. It is naturally possible that some Christians adopted the idea of separating themselves from the heathens without missionary influence, as did some non-Christians who wanted to separate themselves from Christians because they felt that the latter were too different[86] or too eager to proselytize[87]. A feeling of difference may have been one reason for keeping away from the heathens, but a more important reason, as I see it, must have been the advice and warnings which the Christians received at the mission schools and in sermons about the danger of heathens and heathen customs. At least such indoctrination obviously reinforced the feeling of difference. Thus in most cases the separation of the Christian Ovambo from their non-Christian compatriots, when it occurred on the Christians' initiative, was basically a reflection of the missionaries' attempts to isolate them.

At first, when the Christian congregations were still small, the isolation could be a spatial one, too. From the 1880s onwards the missionaries deliberately tried to gather all the Christians close to the mission stations in order to separate them

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84 McKittrick, 1995, p. 166–167; Kreike, 1996, p. 275–276; McKittrick, 2002, p. 206–208, 259.

85 The missionaries' documents in fact contain very little information to indicate that Christians voluntarily separated themselves from heathens. The only clear indication I found was in a 1935 report by Saari, who stated that Christian youths in Ombalantu did not visit pagan homesteads because they wanted to deepen their Christianity. (See Saari, Heikki, Report on parish inspections in Ombalantu, Uukwaluudhi and Uukolonkadhi 1935, Hha13, AFMS, NAF).

86 An example of the non-Christians' attitude towards Christians was given by the pastor Natanael Shinana. When he was child in the 1930s, Christian and non-Christian children sometimes herded cattle together, and in the evening the Christian children would pray, which made the non-Christian children feel uneasy. "They were not afraid of us as they would have been afraid of a lion, but they were tense because we were so different from them" (Natanael Shinana, interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama).

87 Pastor Frans Kaukondi, who converted in 1952, lost most of his non-Christian friends soon afterwards, because he tried to make them convert too (Frans Kaukondi, interviewed on 7 Dec. 1998 at Onemanya, Ongandjera).

from heathen influences.[88] As far as I know, there is no documentation to indicate that this was still the missionaries' deliberate policy after 1910, and it may indeed not have been, because Martti Rautanen at least had already come to the conclusion in 1898 that making Christians live near mission stations seriously lessened their opportunities to influence non-Christians.[89] Some spatial separation seem to have existed during the first decades of the 20th century, however, at least in some western communities, because the missionaries referred to the existence of Christian and heathen "villages" in Ongandjera in the 1910s.[90] On the other hand, Johannes Kalenga mentioned that when his family was not yet Christian (in the late 1920s and early 1930s), they had Christian neighbours.[91] This might indicate that the spatial separation was never complete, or was coming to an end around the 1920s, except in Uukwaluudhi where there were still so few Christians in the late 1920s that they continued to live separately from the non-Christians.[92]

When spatial separation was not possible, or rational, it was still considered necessary to try to isolate Christians from dangerous heathen influences. In 1918 Liljeblad strongly demanded that disciplinary actions should be taken against those Christians who participated in heathens' feasts.[93] This was not as such officially criminalized, but it was something which Christians were seriously warned not to do. Contacts with heathens were not forbidden, and it was quite acceptable for Christians to help non-Christians when moving homesteads, for example, providing that they returned home before dusk and did not participate in any nighttime "binges".[94] Similarly mixed marriages between Christians and non-Christians were considered a threat, as it was believed that the non-Christian spouse was bound to drag the Christian spouse back to heathenism.[95] On the other hand, such marriages had to be allowed as long as there were congregations with clearly imbalanced sex ratios. Once the numbers of Christians began increasing, however,

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88 Varis, 1988, p. 156; Eirola, 1992, p. 51–52. The first synodal meeting decided in 1888 that Christians should live near the mission stations so that they would not "be harassed" by heathens (Teinonen, 1949, p. 46).

89 McKittrick, 2002, p. 99.

90 N. Wäänänen's Annual Reports 1914, 1915 and 1916 (Ongandjera), mmm 20 Jan. 1915, Appendix 18 & mmm 22 March 1916, Appendix 14 & mmm 17 Jan. 1917, Appendix 30, Hha7; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 25 March 1920, Eac22. All in AFMS, NAF. See also McKittrick, 1995, p. 167.

91 Johannes Kalenga, interviewed on 7 Dec. 1998 at Etilyasa, Ongandjera.

92 S. Aarni's Annual Report 1928 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 21 Jan. 1929, unnumbered appendix, Hha10, AFMS, NAF.

93 E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 17 Sept. 1918, Eac 21, AFMS, NAF.

94 E.g. V. Alho, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista jotka toimitettiin 20.–31.8.1927 (Report on parish inspections, Elim), Hha9; V. Alho, Seurakunnan tarkastus Onajenassa 7–10.11.1931 (Parish inspection in Onayena), Hha11; O. Aho's Annual Report 1935 (Uukwaluudhi), Mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 37, Hha14. All in AFMS, NAF. Pöytäkirjoja tehty tarkastustilaisuuksissa Ambomaalla 1925 (Parish inspections during mission director Tarkkanen's visit), p. 47 (Elim 16.8.1925), Dga, AELCIN; Anon., Matkalla länsiheimojen seurakunnissa 10.–15.5.1941 (Touring the western parishes), Ongandjera 13.5.1941, Daac, AELCIN.

95 E.g. V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 24 May 1919, Eac21; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 6 Jan. 1919, Eac21; H. Saari's Annual Report 1920 (western communities), mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 17, Hha8; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista 20.–31.8.1927, Elim (Parish inspections, Elim inspection), Hha9; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1928 (Elim), mmm 21 Jan. 1929, unnumbered appendix, Hha10. All in AFMS, NAF.

enabling Christians to find Christian spouses, actions were taken against mixed marriages in order to isolate the Christians from yet another source of heathen danger. In the late 1920s mixed marriages were allowed only if the non-Christian spouse was committed to being baptized, and if the parish elders had given permission for the marriage. After 1929 mixed marriages were practically forbidden, and a Christian who married a non-Christian lost all his ecclesiastical rights except the right to attend divine services.[96]

It was particularly important to isolate those Christians who were believed to be the most vulnerable to heathen influences, i.e. the children and young people[97]. This aspect was revealed by the narratives recounted by Rakel Nailenge and Titus Ngula, who said that in their childhood (in the 1910s and 1930s) many Christian parents did not allow their children to visit heathen homesteads without accompanying adults.[98] The idea of isolating the young people is also present in a proposal made by Laimi Koskimaa in 1930 that pupils at girls' schools should be allowed to have only one month's vacation each year because at home their chastity was endangered by heathen relatives.[99] Although the existence of the problem was acknowledged by other missionaries, Koskimaa's suggestion for near total isolation of girls was turned down. Alho and Liljeblad believed that such isolation would not only anger the girls' parents, who would be deprived of the necessary labour during the agricultural season, but would also unnecessarily alienate the girls from their own culture. A little later it was also pointed out that isolating girls from their (less advanced) relatives was bad for their morals, because it would make them proud.[100]

Koskimaa's suggestion and its fate show that isolating Christians was not an unambiguous matter. Separation could never be total,[101] nor was it in the missionaries' interest to isolate Christians totally from non-Christians. The missionaries, for example, would have lost many excellent opportunities for personal talks with hea-

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96 Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista länsiheimoissa 1928 (parish inspections in western communities), Uukwaluudhi 11.10.1928, Hha10; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista Ambomaalla 1933 (Report on parish inspections), Uukwambi, Hha12; H. Saari's Annual Report 1935 (Elim), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 32, Hha14; Ambomaan Evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon järjestyssäännöt (Regulation of the Ovamboland Lutheran Church) 1924 §32 and 1929/1938 §32, Hhc2; Regulations of the Evangelical-Lutheran Ovambokavango Church 1958 §72, Hhc2. All in AFMS, NAF.

97 The missionaries were particularly worried about children under school age, whom they regarded being particularly vulnerable to the bad influences of their non-Christian friends. (See Mmm 21 Jan. 1929 §1, Hha10, AFMS, NAF).

98 Rakel Nailenge, interviewed on 30 Nov. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama; Titus Ngula, interviewed on 19 Nov. 1998 at Oshitaji, Ondonga. Children visiting non-Christians' homesteads alone were apparently also a problem from the missionaries' point of view, because they were discussed in nursing education lessons at Oshigambo girls' school. (M. Anttila's Annual Report 1933 [Oshigambo girls' school], mmm 17–18 Jan. 1934, Appendix 14, Hha12, AFMS, NAF.)

99 L. Koskimaa to M. Tarkkanen 17 Oct. 1930, Eac30, AFMS, NAF. The problem had also been pointed out earlier by Anna Rautaheimo (see A. Rautaheimo's Annual Report 1924 (Oshigambo girls' school), mmm 20–21 Jan. 1925, Appendix 13, Hha9, AFMS, NAF).

100 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 8 Oct. 1930, Eac30; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 12 Feb. 1931, Eac30; M. Anttila to M. Tarkkanen 11 Nov. 1932, Eac31; E. Lahtinen's Annual Report 1938 (Oshigambo girls' school), mmm 22–23 Feb. 1939, unnumbered appendix, Hha17. All in AFMS, NAF.

101 See chapter five.

thens if non-Christians had not been allowed to participate in Christians' family celebrations[102]. Furthermore, had there been no contacts between Christians and non-Christians, the missionaries would have lost a very important channel of proselytism, i.e. Ovambo Christians who spread the message among the heathen by words and deeds. In this respect the missionaries were in fact occasionally doing something which was contrary to the idea of isolation, in that they sent Christians to meet heathens. The contact could be of temporary nature, as in Ongandjera in the 1910s, when each adult Christian was given a couple of heathen households which he or she was expected to visit every now and then in order to draw the inhabitants to the faith.[103] On the other hand, they could be more permanent, as when reliable Christians were sent to live in heathen areas. Although there is not much information about this practise, it may have been in use at the same time as spatial separation. In the 1890s a man who was one of the very first Ovambo Christians lived and worked among non-Christians in Eastern Ondonga.[104] Similarly, some reliable Christian families or teachers were settled in heathen wards in the Ontananga and Onayena areas of Ondonga in the 1910s and in Uukwaluudhi and Uukolonkadhi in the 1910s and 1920s.[105] After this the growing number of Christians, and the resulting gradual disappearance of purely non-Christian wards, seems to have brought the practise to an end. But all in all, the settling of Christians among heathens shows that the more reliable among them could be used as agents of the faith, while at the same time the missionaries tried to protect less reliable Christians from bad influences by isolating them from heathens.

Heathens were a problem when the missionaries tried to keep their followers Christian, but apostates, the excommunicated Christians, were a menace. They were bad examples, and therefore decent Christians had to be isolated from them as effectively as possible. "It is too late to try to preach to apostates. Do not judge them but instead pay no attention to them. Just keep them away from yourselves", as Vapaavuori advised the Christians in 1946.[106] Apostates were to be treated as if

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102 H. Saari's Annual Report 1929 (Ombalantu), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 36, Hha11; O. Aho's Annual Report 1935 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 37, Hha14. Both in AFMS, NAF.

103 N. Wäänänen to M. Tarkkanen 31 Aug. 1917, Eac20; N. Wäänänen's Annual Report 1917 (Rehoboth), mmm 15 Jan. 1918, Appendix 16, Hha7. Both in AFMS, NAF. Visiting heathens was also an obligation for some Christians later. In 1940 the pupils of the newly established Uukwaluudhi girls' school were ordered to visit heathen homesteads in pairs every Friday to sing, read the Bible and deliver leaflets (see H. Ranttila to U. Paunu 3 May 1940, Eac39, AFMS, NAF).

104 Peltola, 1958, p. 116–117.

105 J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 22 Aug. 1910, Eac16; S. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 30 Oct. 1929, Eac29; A. Hänninen's Annual Report 1911 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 18 Jan. 1912, Appendix 9, Hha6; K. Björklund's repot on the situation in Onayena, mmm 17 July 1912, §1, Appendix 1, Hha6; K. Björklund's Annual Report 1912 (Onayena), mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendix 12, Hha6; J. Wehanen's Annual Report 1915 (Ontananga), mmm 22 March 1916, Appendix 8, Hha7; A. Järvinen's Annual report 1923 (Uukwaluudhi & Uukolonkadhi), mmm 8 Jan. 1924, Appendix 19, Hha19. All in AFMS, NAF.

106 Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan...tarkastuksista 1946, p. 18, Daac, AELCIN. A decade earlier Heikki Saari was equally outspoken. "Apostates are worse than heathens and Christians must have nothing to do with them." (Saari, Heikki, Ojentavasta sielunhoidosta [about corrective discipline], mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936 §5, Appendix 45, Hha14, AFMS, NAF). (Transl. KM)

they were dead, and this message was emphasised with appropriate symbolism. Death bell was tolled when the names of newly excommunicated members were read in church, and there could also be a symbolic throwing of sand, as into a grave.[107]

It was not only the bad influence of heathens and apostates that the missionaries were worried about, but also the influence of other Europeans or non-Ovambo Africans. Migrant labour in particular was considered a huge problem from the point of view of isolation. Some missionaries did point out that it was essential for the Ovambo economy and could even arouse interest in becoming Christian,[108] but more often "The South" was described in bleak terms as a source of sin, vice, secularism, disobedience, apostasy and dangerous political ideas.[109] The missionaries' views of labour migration are best summed up by quoting Viktor Alho's annual report from 1915, written during a devastating famine. Alho mentions as an example of a true Ovambo Christian a man who said that he would rather die of hunger than try to save his family by going to work in Hereroland and meet all possible temptations there.[110] To Alho's mind "The South" was obviously something horrible which was bound to corrupt even the best of Christians. This became evident again in 1934, when he strongly opposed the idea that some reliable young Ovambo teachers should be sent to a teacher training school in the Union to complement their studies. Not only was that a danger to the morals of these teachers, because even the best Ovambo were weak characters, but they would also adopt dangerous ideas in the south and spread them in Ovamboland.[111]

It is apparent that had the missionaries had the power, they would have done everything possible to stop Christian labour migration in order to isolate the Ovambo from dangerous influences. They wanted to do this, but they couldn't.

107 A. & V. Nieminen to T. Vapaavuori 11 Dec. 1950, Eac44; K.J. Petäjä's Annual Report 1932 (Oshigambo), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendix 10, Hha12. Both in AFMS, NAF. Vapaavuori, 1948, p. 286.

108 E.g. N. Wäänänen's Annual Report 1917 (Ongandjera), mmm 15 Jan. 1918, Hha7; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1922 (Elim), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1923, Hha8; V. Alho's Annual Report 1930 (general report on the Ovambo mission) and K.J. Petäjä's Annual Report 1930 (Engela), mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 1 and 39, Hha11; A. Hänninen's Annual Report 1935 (Engela), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 21, Hha14. All in AFMS, NAF.

109 E.g. O. Tylväs to J. Mustakallio 2 Feb. 1911, Eac16; A. Järvinen to K.A. Paasio 7 Sept. 1921, Eac22; E. Järvinen to M. tarkkanen 14 June 1924, Eac24; E. Närhi to M. Tarkkanen 29 June and 2 Sept. 1924, Eac24; E. Liljeblad's Annual Report 1912 (Oniipa), mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendix 3, Hha6; R. Rautanen's Annual Report 1923 (general report), mmm 8 Jan. 1924, Appendix 5, Hha8; K. Himanen's Annual Report 1939 (Ombalantu), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1940, Appendix 38, Hha18; V. Alho's Annual Report 1943 (general report), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1944, unnumbered appendix, Hha20; H. Saari's Annual Report 1946 (Ohigambo–Oshitayi), mmm 22–23 Jan. 1947, Appendix 13, Hha21; Minutes of the School Committee 30 April 1948 §1, Hha21; L. Lindström's Annual Report 1953 (schools), mmm 12–15 Jan. 1954, Appendix20, Hha25; W. Kivinen's Annual Report 1954 (Onayena, tour in Polize Zone), mmm 19–20 Jan 1955, Appendix 23, Hha26; J. Marttunen's Annual Report 1960 (Polize Zone), mmm 17–19 Jan. 1961, Appendix 20, Hha32; Mmm 9–11 Jan 1962 §8, Hha33. All in AFMS, NAF. Kivinen, Walde, Raportti allekirjoittaneen matkasta... Ambomaalle 1949–1950, p. 3–4, 21–22, Dgb, AELCIN; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani... 20 kesäkuuta – 20 joulukuuta 1954, p. 64–65, 93–94, Dga, AELCIN.

110 V. Alho's Annual Report 1915 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 22 March 1916, Appendix 17, Hha7, AFMS, NAF.

111 Alho, Viktor, Lähetystyö ja sivistys ambolähetyksen näkökulmasta katsottuna (20.4.1934), Hha12, AFMS, NAF.

Had they taken action against labour migration, they would have been faced with hundreds of displeased and disobedient Christian men and, more importantly, they would have angered the colonial government[112]. In fact, partly in order to remain on terms with the government, the missionaries once actually promised to encourage the Ovambo to go to work in the diamond mines. It all began in 1926, when Consolidated Diamond Mines approached the missionaries and asked if they could help with labour recruiting. Missionaries refused to become recruiting officers but promised to speak favourably about work in the diamond mines and to publish a favourable article in the church newsletter. This step was taken hesitantly, but it was considered necessary because Native Commissioner Hahn had hinted that the government might introduce taxation in Ovamboland unless labour recruiting was intensified otherwise. This was something which the missionaries did not want, because it would have meant increased government presence in the area. On the other hand, the step was considered morally possible because it was better for men to go to work in the mines than in the towns, where there were more temptations. Furthermore, the small grant which the CDM promised the FMS for its medical work apparently made the decision easier.[113]

The missionaries' sudden willingness to participate in the promotion of labour migration was a political necessity, but it was harmful from the point of view of isolation. Therefore something had to be done to minimize the effects of the sinful south. At first the missionaries were unable to do anything concrete; they just emphasised improvement of the boys' Christian education as a means to combat the spread of vice.[114] They also wrote tracts to be distributed to men who were leaving for work.[115] From the 1940s it became possible to try to curtail the adoption of harmful ideas by intensifying pastoral care for the labourers. This was done by sending Ovambo evangelists or teachers to Central and Southern Namibia. Evangelization among labourers began in 1943, when Tomas Kalumbu was sent to Mariental. Work could be commenced on a larger scale when a cooperation agreement had been signed with the Rhenish Mission and the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in 1948. In the mid-1950s there were six Ovambo evangelists working among the labourers, a number which was considered highly insufficient for proper pastoral care.[116]

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112 See V. Alho to U. Paunu 6 Nov. 1937, Eac38, AFMS, NAF.

113 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 2 Dec. 1926, Eac26; A. Perheentupa to M. Tarkkanen 28 Dec. 1926, Eac26; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 4 March 1927, Eac27; V. Alho's Annual Report 1926 (general report), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appendix 1, Hha9; Minutes of the field administration board 20 April 1927 §5, Hha9; V. Alho's Annual Report 1927 (general report), mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendix 1, Hha10. All in AFMS, NAF.

114 W. Kivinen to M. Tarkkanen 28 Sept. and 20 Nov. 1926, Eac26; W. Kivinen to the members of the school committee 4 Oct. 1926, Hha9; E.J. Pentti to O. Vuorela 13 Feb. 1956, Eac47. All in AFMS, NAF. Minutes of the School Committee 30 April 1948 §1, Aad, AELCIN.

115 Minutes of the Church Administration 16 Feb. 1937 §5, Hha15, AFMS, NAF.

116 Minutes of the Field Administration Board 1 July 1942 §3, 5 April 1943 §2, 7 Dec. 1943 §3, 5 July 1944 §2, 13 Dec. 1948 §5, 17 Feb. 1949 §3, Hha20-22; Mmm 8–9 Jan. 1948 §25, Hha21; Mmm 24–27 Aug. 1954 §16, Hha25; B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1957 (general report), mmm 14–17 Jan. 1958, Appendix 1, Hha29. All in AFMS, NAF; Tomas Kalumbu interviewed on 19 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga.

Not only were the ideas which men adopted while outside Ovamboland considered dangerous to Christian souls, but also those which came to Ovamboland from outside without missionary control. Ovambo Christians needed to be isolated from these, too. This aim is evident in the fierce resistance of the FMS to the government plans to allow Anglicans and Roman Catholics to enter Ovamboland in the 1920s,[117] and the same aim can also be found in many comments which missionaries made when the teaching of foreign languages in mission schools was being discussed. As the presiding missionary, Alho, remained opposed the idea for a long time, because he felt that a foreign language ability would draw men into closer contacts with harmful influences from the south.[118] If a language was taught, it was not to be taught to women, because that might make them move to towns, which were regarded as immoral places. Neither was it to be taught to all people because many of them might use their ability to adopt dangerous political ideas.[119] When a foreign language then was to be taught, it was at least important to teach the one which would be the least dangerous. One reason why Walde Kivinen and Erkki Lehto favoured Afrikaans as the foreign language to be taught in the mission schools was their idea that there was a far smaller amount of "corruptive literature" available in it than in English.[120]

Because it was not possible to isolate Christians from all sources of sin, a system of surveillance and punishments had to be created to minimize the damage done by the contacts with evil. According to the missionaries, the Ovambo Christians were ignorant in many respects and constantly committed sins of various kinds, and it was therefore important that a missionary was kept informed of any misbehaviour by any member of his congregation, so that he could correct it, either by advising and warning, or by threatening the person with punishment. If that did not work and the sinner did not repent or correct his behaviour, the missionary was obliged

117 On the FMS fight against allowing Anglicans and RCs to commence work in Ovamboland, see Kemppainen, 1998, p. 57–115, 243–245.

118 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 16 July 1926, Eac26; Alho, Viktor, Lähetystyö ja sivistys ambolähetyksen näkökulmasta katsottuna (20.4.1934), Hha12. Both in AFMS, NAF. ** One of Alho's colleagues, Nestori Väänänen, was of a quite different opinion. He regarded the teaching of foreign languages as important because it would give the more talented Africans a chance to enjoy "the best products of the white man's mind". (N. Väänänen to the Board of Directors of FMS 4 May 1923, mmm 1–2 May 1923, Appendix 3, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.)

119 Koulukomitean mietintö no. 1 [Report of the School Committee no. 1], s.d. but 1925, appendix in the minutes of the field administration board 12–13 Jan. 1926, Hha9; Minutes of the school committee 21 Aug. 1926 §1, Hha9; Tarkkanen, Matti, Promemoria sen tarkastuksen johdosta jonka herra W. Orban teki Ambomaalle ja Okavangolle kesäkuussa 1936 [memorandum concerning W. Orban's school inspection in Ovamboland and Okavango in 1936], s.d., Eac37; Finnish translation of the FMS annual report 1936 to the Administrator of SWA by W. Kivinen, Hhd1. All in AFMS, NAF.

120 W. Kivinen to K.A. Paasio 29 July 1935, Eac36; Lehto, Erkki, Ambolähetyksen koulutyön edelleen kehittäminen (2 March 1934) [Further development of mission schools], Hha12. Both in AFMS, NAF. (Lehto was also afraid that the Ovambo would be tempted to join the Anglicans or the Catholics if they learned English, whereas if they learned Afrikaans, they could read good Lutheran literature in German.)

to excommunicate him so that he would not corrupt the rest of the congregation.[121]

The surveillance was expected to work on two levels, of which the first may be called self-surveillance. According to the rules, every Christian was expected to confess his sins to the missionary (or pastor) of his congregation before taking Communion.[122] Then there was surveillance by others. The second synod of the Ovamboland congregations had already ordered Christians in 1899 to report the "crimes" of other Christians to the missionaries, and a similar duty was retained later.[123] But with the growth of the congregations such a system of surveillance was apparently not considered efficient enough, and so reliable members of the congregations were appointed as parish elders in the 1910s, with the duty, among other things, of making sure that the members of the congregation lived their lives according to Christian principles. The teachers also had a similar duty.[124]

Not all the missionaries were happy with the system of surveillance. Nobody questioned the need for surveillance *per se*, but the presiding missionary, Walde Kivinen, supported by the mission director, Uno Paunu, felt that it was carried out in the wrong way. Kivinen felt that the Ovambo pastors in particular performed their surveillance in such a "snooping" or "police investigation" fashion that it weakened ordinary Christians' trust in pastors and missionaries.[125] In addition, Native Commissioner Hahn made an unmistakably unfavourable comment about the missionaries' system of surveillance, stating that they had appointed spies to report on the private doings of ordinary Christians.[126] Hahn's statement is pun-

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121 See e.g. W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 12 June 1936, Eac37; Wehanen, Juho, Kirkkokuri – millä kannalla se on ja mitä parannuksia siinä olisi aikaansaatava, mmm 20 Sept. 1911, Appendix 1, Hha6; Heikki Saari's untitled introduction about church discipline, mmm 16 Jan. 1918, Appendix 37, Hha7; Saari, Heikki, Ojentavasta sielunhoidosta, mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 45, Hha14; Mmm 31 Aug. 1937 §26, Hha15. All in AFMS, NAF. See also Varis, 1988, p. 182.

122 Ambomaan evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon järjestyssäännöt 1924 § 25-26, Hhc2; Ibid. 1929/1938 §26-27. Both in AFMS, NAF. Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 17. Lb, AELCIN; Tarkkanen, Matti, Kertomus Suomen Lähetysseuran lähetysalalle Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1925, p. 21, Dga, AELCIN; Varis, 1988, p. 179–180.

123 A. Glad to M. Tarkkanen 20 April 1914, Eac19; Ambomaan evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon järjestyssäännöt 1924 §47, Hhc2; Ibid. 1929/1938 § 47, 50, Hhc2. All in AFMS, NAF; Varis, 1988, p. 156.

124 Mmm 27 Nov. 1911 § 15 including K.J. Petäjä's introduction on parish elders and their duties in appendix 10, Hha6; Ambomaan evankelis-luterialisen kirkon järjetyssäännöt 1924 §61, Hhc2; Ibid. 1929/1938 §61, Hhc2; Regulations for the Evangelical-Lutheran Ovambokavango Church 1958 § 127, Hha2. All in AFMS, NAF; Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 7-8, Lb, AELCIN; Varis, 1988. p. 157, 164, 179. (The parish elders were a replica of the "village elders" who were responsible for the surveillance of the morals of the Lutheran congregations in Finland in the 19th century. See, Kansanaho, 1976, p. 74, 87–88; Murtorinne, 2000, p. 63, 70–72, 201).

125 W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 12 June 1936 and 22 Aug. 1938, Eac37–38; Kivinen, Walde, Selostusta luennoistani maakalaispappien kertauskursseilla Oniipassa 1938 [Report on my lectures at the pastors' refresher course at Oniipa in 1938], mmm 17–18 Aug. 1938 §7, Appedix 1, Hha 16. Both in AFMS, NAF. Paunu, Uno, Kertomukset Afrikan lähetysalalla vuonna 1937 toimitetuista tarkastuksista, p. 20 (Paunu's meeting with Ontanga parish elders and teachers 7 July 1937), Dga, AELCIN. See also V. Alho's Annual Report 1944 (general report), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1945, Appendix 1, Hha20, AFMS, NAF.

126 NCO Annual Report 1937, p. 15, 11/1, NAO, NAN.

gent but not necessarily unjustified; Had the missionaries' system worked in the way they wanted, their surveillance network among Christians would have been admirably extensive and intensive. But it did not work. Although missionaries could occasionally claim that parish elders did carry out their duties well,[127] laments over unwillingness and negligence of duties were more common. It is apparent that the system had serious malfunctions at every level. Confessions as a form of surveillance failed to work properly because the Christians were not honest when they confessed their sins to the missionaries. As Kivinen put it, confessions were business matters for Ovambo Christians; they confessed small sins to make the missionaries happy but seldom trusted them enough to tell them about the more serious ones.[128] Neither do the Christians seem to have been very happy about having their moral behaviour supervised by the parish elders, a customs that obviously raised animosity towards the latter, and this probably is the main reason why many elders were said to have been neglecting their surveillance duties.[129] Even when misdeeds did come to light, there still was one problem; Not all the Christians were afraid of congregational punishments. It was said that only the threat of excommunication made most, though still not all, wrongdoers correct their behaviour, while receiving lesser punishments was something which some Christians actually boasted about.[130]

Although total isolation of the Christians was not possible and surveillance of their morals did not work very well, there was one more means to which the missionaries resorted in their attempt to keep their flock on the strait and narrow path; They were constantly reminding the Christians that even though they might have been able to hide their sins from the missionaries, there was one who saw everything and punished people for their sins after death. Although there is no direct infor-

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127 E.g. A. Hänninen's Report Oct.–Dec. 1920 (Oshigambo), mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 14a, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.

128 W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 12 June 1936, Eac37; Kivinen, Walde, Mitä voidaan tehdä luopumuksen estämiseksi..., mmm 21 Aug. 1937, Appendix 11, Hha15. See also Saari, Heikki, Ojentavasta sielunhoidosta, mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 45, Hha14. All in AFMS, NAF.

129 See E. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 6 Nov. 1926, Eac26, AFMS, NAF; Mmm 20 Sept. 1911 §1, Hha6, AFMS, NAF; Saari, Heikki, Ambomaan kirkon virsikirjakysymys [The question of the Ovambo hymnal], mmm 26–28 Aug. 1937, Appendix 6, Hha15, AFMS, NAF; Kivinen, Walde, Selostusta luennoistani maakalaispappien kertauskursseilla Oniipassa 1938, mmm 17–18 Aug. 1938 § 7, Appendix 1, Hha16, AFMS, NAF; Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 8, Lb, AELCIN; Pöytäkirjoja tehty tarkastustialisuuksissa Ambomaalla 1925, p. 44 (Miss.dir. Tarkkanen's meeting with Elim elders and teachers 15 Aug. 1925), Dga, AELCIN; Paunu, Uno, Kertomukset Afrikan lähetysalalla vuonna 1937 toimitetuista tarkastuksista, s. 20, Dga, AELCIN. Hynönen, Erkki, Hengellinen ja siveellinen tila Ambomaan seurakunnissamme. In Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani Afrikan työaloillemme ja Israeliin 20.6–20.12.1954, Appendix 33, p.217, Dga, AELCIN.

130 See E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen(?) 7 (?) 1917, Hha20; E. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 14 June 1924, Eac24; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 13 Oct 1929, Eac29; A. Hänninen to M. Tarkkanen 21May 1933, Eac31; H. Saari to K.A. Paasio 1 Aug 1934, Eac35; T. Vapaavuori to U. Paunu 28 Sept. 1936, Eac37; Mmm 20 Sept 1911 §1, Hha6; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Mitä olisi tehtävä? [what should be done?], mmm 29 July 1936, Appendix 1, Hha14. All in AFMS, NAF; Pöytäkirjoja tehty tarkastustilaisuuksissa Ambomaalla 1925, p. 59 (Miss. dir. Tarkkanen's meeting with Tsandi elders and teachers 29 Aug. 1925), Dga, AELCIN.

mation concerning the content of the missionaries' sermons, there is sufficient indirect evidence to say that up to the Second World War both the missionaries and the Ovambo pastors emphasized the law of God in their sermons rather than the grace of the said deity. Instead of preaching God's forgiveness they tended to preach that the fate of sinners was eternal damnation.[131] Such an image of God was adopted at least by some lay people, because one early Christian remembered a fellow Christian having warned him that God would never forgive those people who slid back into heathenism.[132] The reason why the missionaries emphasized punishment more than mercy appears to be their distrust in the Ovambos' ability to understand God's grace in the "right" way (right as defined by the missionaries). They seem to have been concerned that if they had preached about a God who forgives sinners, the Ovambo Christians would have taken that as permission to commit sins.[133]

Some missionaries were not happy with the style of preaching. Ilmari Saukkonen claimed in 1935 that the missionaries' sermons were far too "wishy-washy", and that many missionaries were too cautious about hurting people's feelings, so that their sermons were unable to make people afraid of sin. Instead, "the morphine of a falsified Gospel" had given the Ovambo Christians a false sense of peace and made them undisciplined people who were wallowing in vice.[134] The same opinion was also expressed by the presiding missionary, Kivinen, who claimed that it would be irresponsible to preach about forgiveness to Christians who wilfully wallowed in sin.[135] Some other missionaries, and also Kivinen when a little older, had a somewhat different view. They felt that missionaries should begin to preach more about God's indulgence without totally dropping the themes of law and punishment.[136] The matter was discussed at the missionaries' meeting in 1937 but opinion remained divided and no decisions were taken.[137] This discussion apparently did not alter the content of the sermons to any considerable degree, however,

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131 See E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 17 Nov. 1920, Eac22; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 13 Feb. 1927, Eac27; E. Liljeblad M. Tarkkanen 21 March 1931, Eac30; V. Alho to K.A. Paasio 25 Jan. 1935, Eac36; V. Alho to the Ovamboland church administration 24 April 1935, Eac36; W. Kivinen to K.A. Paasio 16 June 1935, Eac36; W. Björklund to U. Paunu 15 Dec. 1938, Eac38; W. Björklund's Annual Report 1930 (Onayena), mmm 13-15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 13, Hha11; A. Hänninen's Annual Report 1931 (Engela), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 25, Hha11; Mmm 31 Aug. 1937 §26 and appendix 11a, Hha15; E. Lehto's Annual Report 1940 (Oniipa), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1940, Appendix 8, Hha18; Lehto, Erkki, Ambolähetyksen tulevaisuus, s.d. (late 1930s), p. 9, Hhb2. All in AFMS, NAF. Paunu, Uno, Kertomukset Afrikan lähetysalalla vuonna 1937 toimitetuista tarkastuksista, p. 69 (miss.dir. Paunu's meeting with Engela teachers 7 Aug. 1937), Dga, AELCIN.

132 Sakeus Iihuhua's autobiography, quoted in McKittrick, 2002, p. 211.

133 See E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 17 Nov. 1920, Eac22; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 14 Nov. 1932, Eac31; A. Glad to K.A. Paasio 3 Jan. 1935, Eac36; Mmm 31 Aug. 1937, Appendix 11a, Hha15. All in AFMS, NAF.

134 I. Saukkonen to the Ovamboland church administration 25 March 1935, Eac36, AFMS, NAF.

135 W. Kivinen to K.A. Paasio 16 June 1935, Eac36, AFMS, NAF.

136 E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 21 March 1931, Eac30; V. Alho to Ovamboland church administration 24 April 1935, Eac36; W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 22 Aug. 1938, Eac38; W. Björklund to U. Paunu 15 Dec. 1938, Eac38; Lehto, Erkki, Ambolähetyksen tulevaisuus, s.d. (late 1930s), p. 9, Hhb2. All in AFMS, NAF.

137 Mmm 31 Aug. 1937 § 26 and Appendix 11a, Hha15, AFMS, NAF.

for even in the early 1950s many sermons by Ovambo pastors were, as Liina Lindström put it, nothing but endless scolding and warnings.[138] Thus hell was still a prime topic, but it is impossible to say to what extent preaching about it was able to keep the Christians away from sin.

Evolution of missionary-Ovambo relations: mutual attitudes

Trust and respect are two concepts which provide useful tools for analysing relations between the missionaries and the Ovambo. With the help of these concepts it is possible to create an adequately comprehensive outlook of the evolution of relations, by examining whether, or to what extent, manifestations of these attitudes towards the other group can be found on either side. Trust and respect are particularly useful concepts when studying Ovambo attitudes towards the missionaries, because in the case of the Ovambo they were independent of each other, i.e. there could be respect even when there was no trust. In the case of the missionaries, trust and respect are somewhat less useful, however, because they usually seem to have gone hand in hand and are therefore more like connotations of the same overall attitude rather than independent attitudes.

As far as the missionaries' relations to the Ovambo are concerned, it can be said that, by and large, both trust and respect were in short supply, though not totally out of stock. The main reason for this was the missionaries' sense of cultural and religious superiority[139], which meant that they could not respect the Ovambo, and without respect there was little room for trust. This lack of respect and trust was evident in several of the phenomena described in the previous chapter. The missionaries' fear of making the Ovambo Christians proud is a clear sign of a lack of trust, as they did not believe that the Ovambo could remain humble enough if trust was shown in them. Another important point to bear in mind is the fact that the missionaries' view of the Ovambo was mostly constructed in pejorative terms, i.e. they simply did not respect Africans. Furthermore, as already pointed out, the

138 L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 11 Aug. 1952, Eac45, AFMS, NAF. Lindström's view is supported by the findings of Seppo Löytty, who analysed the content of 281 sermons given by Ovambo pastors in the early 1960s and found that many of them had a tendency to be long lists of sins, while the merciful father had little place in the image of God that was presented. (Löytty, 1971, p. 119–121, 144.)

139 The missionaries revealed their sense of cultural superiority implicitly when they wrote about the possibility that some of them might have adapted themselves to the Ovambo way of thinking, for example. According to Emil Liljeblad, such adaptation was caused by too long a stay in the field. This lowered the missionaries' intellectual abilities and their power to resist the temptation of local beliefs. Saari and Vapaavuori also commented on the effects of such adaptation. Saari felt that an adapted missionary was no longer able to carry out pastoral care, while Vapaavuori thought that adaptation made a missionary unable to distinguish good from evil. (See E. Liljeblad to J. Mustakallio 8 Nov. 1912, Eac17; Heikki Saari's introduction about parish discipline, mmm 16 Jan. 1918 §5, Appendix 37, Hha7. Both in AFMS, NAF. Vapaavuori, Tuure, Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan... tarkastuksista 1946, p. 17, Daac, AELCIN.)

missionaries considered the Ovambo on a par with children until well into the post-war period. This obviously placed limits on their feelings of trust and respect: the Ovambo could be trusted and respected only in the way children could.

The missionaries were naturally individuals and had individual attitudes to the Ovambo. One extreme case was Emil Liljeblad, who not only believed that open and favourable relations with Africans were bound to spoil them, but also claimed that the bullet and the noose were the only things which made Africans obedient.[140] There was not much respect there. Another leading missionary of the early 20th century, Reinhold Rautanen, was not arrogant like Liljeblad, but rather suspicious. In 1923 he stated his regret that Ovambo teachers had been given some independence in school work. He was convinced that in due course this would make the teachers gather Christians around themselves and oust the missionaries.[141] There was not much trust there. On the other hand, there were missionaries who occasionally expressed their trust in the Ovambo and their respect for them. In Ari Mutanen's opinion, for example, the Kwanyama were honest, trustworthy and energetic, while Heikki Saari claimed that the Ovambo were actually better preachers than the missionaries.[142]

In order not to make this chapter just a list of loose quotations, it is best to assess the missionaries' attitudes to the Ovambo and relations with them by taking a look at some of the major discussions, and some minor ones, connected with this question. The first example is the discussion which took place at the missionaries' meeting in 1925 about the proper attitude to Ovambo who were to be ordained as pastors. The subject was introduced by Erkki Lehto, who maintained that equality between African workers and Europeans would be unthinkable, because even the best of the Africans were still so immature that giving them independent responsibility would just make them slack and unacceptably proud. He felt that the leadership had to be kept in the missionaries' hands in order to ensure that the Ovambo congregations remained truly Christian. Lehto also painted a picture of the future situation by claiming that the ordination of native pastors would inevitably strengthen the Ovambos' self-esteem, which would develop into a "concealed will". Particularly if the Ovambo came in touch with modern liberation ideas, this will could turn into opposition to the missionaries. In general, Lehto was of the opinion that the missionaries' relation to the African pastors should be open and honest. Fraternizing with them was out of the question, but a master-servant attitude should also be avoided because it might make the Ovambo renounce the missionaries' leadership.[143] In the discussion that followed, most of the missionaries

140 E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 2 April 1917, Eac20; Mmm 15 Jan. 1918 §15, Hha7. Both in AFMS, NAF.

141 R. Rautanen's Annual Report 1923 (general report on Ovambo mission), mmm 8 Jan. 1924, Appendix 5, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.

142 H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 26 Nov. 1918 and 16 Dec. 1918, Eac21; A. Mutanen's Annual Report 1935, mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 23, Hha14; A. Mutanen's Annual Report 1942 (Ongwediva school), mmm 20–21 Jan. 1943, Appendix 29, Hha20. All in AFMS, NAF.

143 E. Lehto, Suhteemme mustiin työtovereihimme, Mmm 14 Sept. to 6 Oct. 1925, Appendix 6, Hha9, AFMS, NAF.

agreed with Lehto, although Heikki Saari emphasised the need to treat Ovambo pastors as colleagues and not as assistants in order not to arouse their dissatisfaction. Antti Perheentupa had different views. He claimed that Blacks were just children, and that if they began considering themselves capable of doing something independently, they had to be shown their weakness by giving them tasks in which they were sure to fail. At the end of the discussion the mission director, Tarkkanen, summarized the instructions for missionaries: Relations with Blacks should be businesslike. Comradely relations should be avoided, because they would just lead the Blacks astray. Tarkkanen also instructed the missionaries not to let the Blacks enter their guest-rooms or dining-rooms.[144] This was to be the proper manner of conduct between missionaries and the "crème de la crème" of Ovambo Christians. Apparently some missionaries felt that they were racially superior,[145] and it was therefore impossible for them to work with Africans on an equal basis.

Twenty-five years later there was again a need to instruct missionaries about the proper attitude towards Africans. This time it was done by Walde Kivinen, who, as the secretary for African missions, was on a tour of inspection in Ovamboland. Kivinen first stated that individual missionaries reacted in different ways when there were conflicts with Africans; some resorted to the cane or cuffs on the ear, while others tried to be extremely kind and offered gifts and sweets. Neither way was correct. Relations with Africans had to be honest, matter-of-fact and rather distant. Lady missionaries in particular had to be careful, and Kivinen even advised them not to have Ovambo boys as foster sons "in order not to give any room for rumours". But men, too, had to avoid excessively close relations. It was not desirable to let one's African guests sleep in the guestroom, missionaries had to avoid being seen less than fully dressed, and taking a sauna bath with Africans was totally out of the question even for men.[146]

As both the discussion of 1925 and Kivinen's instructions show, the missionaries were expected to keep their distance in their relations with Africans[147] . The idea of being on such a friendly terms with Africans that one would have revealed one's private parts to them in sauna was considered highly improper. But even within

144 Mmm 14 Sept to 6 Oct 1925 § 22, Hha9, AFMS, NAF.

145 The feeling of racial superiority was something for which Kivinen criticized his fellow missionaries in the 1930s, and a topic to which one lady missionary, Liina Lindström, referred in the 1950s. (W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 21 Dec. 1937 and 22 Aug. 1938, Eac38; Mmm 4–5 July 1956 §4, Hha27. All in AFMS, NAF) The missionaries' feeling of racial superiority was apparently, by and large, nothing like the Afrikaners' racism, as several missionaries seem to have been disgusted at the Afrikaners' contemptuous attitude to Africans. According to Alho, this attitude was one obstacle to closer cooperation between the FMS and the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk. (See I. Saukkonen to M. Tarkkanen 16 Oct. 1932, Eac31; W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 7 March 1938, Eac38; A.W. Björklund to U. Paunu 21 March 1946, Eac41; V. Alho to U. Paunu 16 May 1946, Eac41; Mmm 4–5 July 1956 §4, Hha27; Kivinen, Walde, Mistä kenkä puristaa? (19.4.1935). Appendix 1 in W. Kivinen, Raportti lähetysjohtaja tohtori Uno Paunulle hänen saapuessaan tarkastusmatkalle Ambomaalle 1937 [Report to mission director Paunu at his arrival on the tour of inspection in Ovamboland], May 1937. Hhb2. All in AFMS, NAF.)

146 W. Kivinen, Raportti allekirjoittaneen matkasta Afrikan sihteerinä Ambomaalle 1949–1950. 28 April 1950, p. 35-37. Dgb, AELCIN.

147 On the need to keep one's distance, see also the circular sent by the presiding missionary, Birger Eriksson, to missionaries in Ovamboland 15 April 1958, series N, AELCIN.

the context of proper relations, it was proper to keep Africans, even the closest of them, outside the more private quarters of mission stations. The missionaries were obviously in Africa to promote Christianity, not to make friends.

The ordination of the first Ovambo pastors in 1925 could, and should, be taken as a token of the missionaries' trust, despite the fact that the new pastors were at first merely dependent assistants for the missionaries. It was not a token of totally sincere trust, however, but rather a necessity brought about by special circumstances. Several missionaries remained unconvinced that the Ovambo were ready for the priesthood, but the ordination took place because more forces were needed to counteract the emerging Anglican and Roman Catholic influence.[148] Nevertheless, the Finns showed more trust in the Africans than their Rhenish coreligionists in the Police Zone, who ordained their first African pastors only in 1949, in a vain attempt to stop dissatisfied Herero and Nama Christians from leaving the Rhenish congregations en masse for the independent African churches.[149] Although the Rhenish missionaries had regarded the Finns' decision to ordain African priests in 1925 as a fatal error,[150] it was obviously not an error at all, as there was no secessionism among the Ovambo comparable to that which occurred among the Herero and the Nama.

Another token of early twentieth-century trust was the limited role which Ovambo Christians were given in the administration of the church and congregations. According to the 1924 church statute, the Ovambo had their representatives on the church synod and had the right to make certain decisions as members of parish meetings, while the parish elders had some say in minor disciplinary matters within the congregations.[151] This was all very well in theory, but in practice the Ovambo Christians were not always trusted enough to be allowed full participation in decision-making. Some measures taken by Viktor Alho as presiding missionary are illustrative in this respect. In 1931 the Olukonda parish meeting elected its representatives for the church synod in accordance with the church statute, but because "those who favoured paganism" voted for people "who did not think about the good of the congregation", Alho "partially ignored the outcome of the vote".[152] Neither did he trust his parish elders enough to give them their full role in disciplinary matters. Alho did negotiate with the elders, but he took the decisions himself, because he considered the elders to be too lax, and also too susceptible to bribery to be able to carry out their duties impartially.[153] On the other

148 E.g. R. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 22 March 1924, Eac24; N. Wäänänen to M. Tarkkanen 17 Sept. 1924, Eac24; Minutes of the field administration board 5 June 1925 §4 and Appendix 1 (N. Wäänänen's introduction "Do we venture to ordain Ovambo priests"), Hha9. All in AFMS, NAF. Cf. Kemppainen, 1998, p. 110.

149 On the situation in the Rhenish Mission Church after WW II, see Schlosser, 1958, p. 85–103; Katjavivi, 1989(b), p.8–11; Nambala, 1990, p. 243–244, 258–259; Hellberg, 1997, p. 238–263; Ngavirue, 1997, p. 204–208; Kößler, 1998, p. 197–209.

150 Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani Afrikan... 1954, p. 68, Dga, AELCIN.

151 See chapter "Arrival of the missionaries..."

152 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 8 June 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF.

153 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 14 Dec. 1927 & 11 Feb. 1930 & 12 Nov. 1932, Eac27, 30, 31, AFMS, NAF.

Walde Kivinen, who was the presiding missionary in Ovamboland in the late 1930s, was in some respects well ahead of his times. He firmly believed that the Africans could only be throughly christianized by other Africans. Many of his colleagues were unable to adopt this idea until well after the Second World War, and therefore Kivinen did not hesitate to criticise them for having too little trust in the Africans. (Photo by courtesy of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission)

hand, on at least one occasion Alho showed "too much" trust in an African. In 1935 he told Filippus Uusiku, pastor of Ontananga, that the government was subsidizing the Ongwediva school with a small grant. After the headmaster of Ongwediva, Ilmari Saukkonen, had criticized him for his openness, Alho admitted that he had made a mistake: "The natives should not be told such things".[154]

The missionaries' relations with the Ovambo came under critical scrutiny in 1935, when Walde Kivinen was appointed as presiding missionary. He was convinced that the only way of really christianizing the Ovambo was to let the Africans themselves do it. He therefore demanded that Ovambo pastors should be given a more independent role in the church. When advocating this idea, he also severely criti-

154 Copy V. Alho to the field administration board 26 April 1935 & Copy I. Saukkonen to V. Alho 28 March 1935, Eac36, AFMS, NAF. ** The reasons why such information should have been kept secret are somewhat obscure. It seems that information about the government grant had reached some pupils in Ongwediva, who believed that it was meant for school meals, and who therefore demanded better food at school. Thus secrecy was needed to avoid confusion, demands and conflicts. Basically though, the missionaries' wish to keep the Ovambo unaware of the financial situation of the mission is probably based on their long-standing idea that the Africans were very reluctant to support the mission's activities financially. The missionaries may therefore have reasoned that if the Ovambo found out that mission was receiving support from the government, they would become even more reluctant to pay their parish fees.

cized the mistakes which had been prevalent until then among the "missionaries of the old school", one of which was the lack of trust in Africans. As Kivinen saw it, this had made the older missionaries stick to patriarchal relations with the Africans, which meant that they accepted only a "slavish mentality" on the part of the Ovambo pastors.[155] Kivinen's crusade led to a positive outcome, because the missionaries' meeting in 1937 decided that Ovambo clergy should be given more responsible duties.[156] Not everyone was happy with Kivinen's activities, though, for the post-war mission director, Vapaavuori, criticized Kivinen for having been too keen on spreading the idea that the leadership of the church would be handed over to indigenous clergy in the near future. This, as Vapaavuori saw it, had raised false expectations and had now made the Kwanyama clergy adopt a critical attitude towards the missionaries.[157]

Kivinen also found out something interesting during his period as presiding missionary. He suddenly realized in 1936 that the church statutes of 1924 and 1929 had never been translated into Oshindonga but had been available only in Finnish.[158] He had good reason to be surprised at this, because the statutes were basic rules which defined not only the administrative structure of the church, but also the rights and duties of pastors, elders and ordinary parishioners. In theory it is possible that the missionaries had decided not to translate the statutes in order not to give the Ovambo independent access to information which they might have used to question the missionaries' actions. Personally I do not believe in this possibility, because Kivinen was so genuinely surprised at the oversight. It is more probable that the whole thing just slipped missionaries' mind somehow, that nobody realized that the statutes ought to be translated. Even if this was the reason, the case still shows that the role which the missionaries reserved for the Africans within the church was a passive one. But the case also tells us something about the attitude of the Ovambo clergy towards the missionaries, for it is quite surprising that none of the pastors apparently ever asked for the statutes to be translated. This would indicate that they had indeed adopted a passive and obedient role, which Kivinen claimed was the only one accepted by many missionaries.

The only major issues which tell us something about the missionaries' relations to the Ovambo after the war are their attitudes to apartheid and the emerging political activity in the early 1960s. As far as apartheid is concerned, very few missionar-

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155 See W. Kivinen to K.A. Paasio 1 April 1935 & 9 April 1935 & 5 June 1935 & 16 June 1935 & 18 Nov. 1935, Eac36; W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 14 April 1936 & 12 June 1936 & 31 July 1936 & 21 Dec. 1937 & 25 Feb. 1938 & 2 July 1938 & 19 Aug. 1938 & 22 Aug. 1938, Eac37–38; Kivinen, Walde, "Mistä kenkä puristaa?" and "Tarvitaanko Ambomaalla vielä valkoista työvoimaa?", Appendices 1 and 2 in Kivinen, Raportti lähetysjohtaja Uno Paunulle...1937, Hhb2. All in AFMS, NAF. ** Kivinen's criticism was not totally justified, because there was at least one missionary of the "old school", August Hänninen, who had already expressed his sincere trust in the Ovambos' ability to work independently in 1922 (see A. Hänninen to M. Tarkkanen 15 June 1922, Eac23, AFMS, NAF).

156 Mmm 31 Aug. 1937 §26, Hha15, AFMS, NAF.

157 T. Vapaavuori to U. Paunu 18 June 1946, Eac41, AFMS, NAF.

158 W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 5–7 March 1936 & 18 April 1939, Eac37, 39; Kivinen, Walde, Raportti lähetysjohtaja Uno Paunulle...1937, p. 6–7, Hhb2. All in AFMS, NAF.

ies in the field ever wrote about it. One of the few was the presiding missionary Birger Eriksson, who participated in an inter-church conference in Pretoria in 1953 where the representatives of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk had used biblical references to justify apartheid. He maintained, however, that there were no biblical justifications for apartheid, and therefore he was in principle against the system. On the other hand, it was in practice the only alternative for the time being because its immediate abolition would have led to a communist takeover. Therefore the only possible course of action, as Eriksson saw it, was to maintain apartheid for now but phase it out in due course.[159] Rev. Seppo Löytty's comments were somewhat more favourable towards apartheid. While he was in South Africa in 1956, on his way to his first term in Ovamboland, he sent an article to the mission director, Vuorela, entitled "My observations about the race question in South Africa". Löytty wrote that apartheid had many aspects which he could not accept, and he also noted that the police used inhuman methods against Africans. On the other hand, he pointed out that the Bantu still were culturally at a very low level, which made it impossible to enfranchise them. For the same reason, racial mixing would only lead to a degeneration in the European culture of South Africa. Löytty was convinced that the National Party government was acting in a "righteous way" and was genuinely aiming at developing the Africans' standard of living. He also thought that the Africans were in favour of apartheid because they did not want to live with the whites.[160] Thus, while Eriksson saw apartheid as an unavoidable evil for the moment, Löytty seems to have considered it a genuinely workable solution for the future.

When apartheid then led to the emergence of political activity in Ovamboland, the missionaries' initial reaction to this was distinctively negative, because, as Erkki Hynönen put it, the Ovambo were not yet qualified for freedom and democracy[161] . There was a fair share of irritation in the missionaries' reactions, because the new political activists were spreading malicious rumours about them and about the colonial government which, as the missionaries saw them, were aimed at spreading fear, hate, terror and disorder among the population.[162] Another reason for the missionaries' irritation was the fact that the activists tried to hold political meetings in schools and at church sites. This was strictly forbidden according to the rules governing religious sites, and the missionaries were obviously afraid that the

159 B. Eriksson to (?)T. Vapaavuori, 15 Dec. 1953, Eac45, AFMS, NAF.

160 Seppo L[öytty] to O. Vuorela 12 Nov. 1956, Eac47, AFMS, NAF.

161 E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 4 Dec. 1960, Eac48, AFMS, NAF.

162 See E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 29 Dec. 1959 & 4 March 1960 & 28 March 1960 & 25 April 1960 & 4 July 1960 & 3 Oct. 1960 & 15 Jan. 1961; A. Hukka to O. Vuorela 1 March 1960 & 30 Dec. 1960; B. Eriksson to O. Vuorela 19 May 1960; J. Marttunen's circular no. 2 to friends in Finland 25 April 1960. All in Eac48–49, AFMS, NAF. A. Hukka's Annual Report 1960 (general report), mmm 17–19 Jan. 1961, Appendix 1, Hha32, AFMS, NAF. ** The missionaries' critical view of the rumours was justified if Hynönen's information is even as much as a half-truth. For example, according to Hynönen's letter of the 4 March 1960, there was a rumour that the corn which the government had sent to Ovamboland for famine relief was poisoned, and another rumour claimed that the government project for building reservoirs had been launched to destroy the Africans, because the water in the reservoirs would be poisoned.

political meetings might make the government take action against the church and the mission.[163] Apart from this irritation, some of the missionaries' comments on political activism also bear witness to a slight but unmistakable patronizing air: it was now a matter of children playing with fire.[164]

The mission headquarters in Helsinki seems to have adopted a slightly more positive attitude to African political aspirations than the missionaries in Ovamboland. The main problem, as the mission director, Vuorela, saw it, was to find a positive approach to the Africans' justified political aims. He emphasized that missionaries should not become involved in politics and should remain obedient to the legitimate government. At the same time they should act so that the Africans would not feel that they were trying to prop up the white regime.[165] The board of directors also took a stand on these political issues in 1964 by sending the missionaries a letter which stated that it was time for a "self-examination". The directors, too, reminded the missionaries that they had to remain obedient to the government, but also pointed out that this did not mean that they were to concur with the aims of the government, nor that apartheid could be considered a justifiable system. Instead, it was the missionaries' moral duty to work for racial equality and the reduction of racial tensions. The following year the directors went further and gave the missionaries permission to protest, even publicly, at acts of obvious injustice done to Africans.[166] Although the presiding missionary, Arvo Eirola, expressed his concern at the possible consequences of the directors' "political activity",[167] the approach was adopted by many young missionaries whose attitude towards African liberation had become sympathetic by the late 1960s. By the 1970s some missionaries were already so openly critical of South African rule that the SWA authorities suspected them of being active initiators of political disturbances.[168]

Alongside the Africans' growing political activism, the missionaries also had to face another change. Religious activities were taken over by the independent Ovambo-Kavango Church and some missionaries had now become employees of an African church. This made some of them reassess their attitude towards Africans, as did one older lady missionary who wrote in 1961:

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163 See E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 18 Dec. 1959 & 25 April 1960; A. Hukka to O. Vuorela 20 April 1960. All in Eac48, AFMS, NAF.

164 See E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 8 Aug. 1960 and B. Eriksson to O. Vuorela 6 Aug 1960, Eac48, AFMS, NAF.

165 Copies of O. Vuorela to A. Hukka 5 Feb. 1960 & 13 April 1962 & 30 Oct. 1962, Eac48–49, AFMS, NAF.

166 Copy the board of directors of the FMS to the field administration board and missionaries in SWA 24 Jan. 1964 & Copy O. Vuorela to A. Eirola 23 Sept. 1965, Eac50, AFMS, NAF. (The key figure behind the directors' opinions and advice was obviously Professor Mikko Juva, the chairman of the board of directors, who had already taken a positive attitude towards the liberation movement in the early 1960s. Juva accepted the aims of the movement, but condemned violence as a means of achieving them. See, Minutes of the joint meeting of the field administration board and the administrative board of the Ovambo-Kavango Church 12 June 1961 §2, Hha32, AFMS, NAF; Soiri & Peltola, 1999, p. 57–60.)

167 A. Eirola to O. Vuorela 7 Dec. 1965, Eac50, AFMS, NAF.

168 See Nambala, 1990, p. 266–269; Soiri & Peltola, 1999, p. 60–63.

> "When one takes a good look at oneself, one realizes how much one has offended against [the Africans] in racial matters. The superiority of our race has been axiomatic, and our way and standard of living has been so different from theirs. It has even been easy to regard one's own Christianity as better than theirs. So far we have been leaders in everything. Now a new age has arrived; the missionaries have been subordinated to the natives."[169]

Then there is the Ovambo side. What was their attitude to the missionaries? Let us start with trust. The missionaries occasionally report in various ways that they were trusted as a group, or that the Ovambo confided in individual missionaries or regarded them as friends.[170] On the other hand, they also made some general remarks stating that they were not trusted. The presiding missionary in 1924, Reinhold Rautanen, remarked that the Ovambo continued to trust implicitly in their traditional healers, while their trust in the missionaries was still very far from perfect. A decade later the presiding missionary at that time, Walde Kivinen, was of the opinion that the Ovambo would never fully trust the missionaries because of cultural differences.[171] Things did not change after the war, either, for Tirronen reported that the Ovambo were obviously suspicious of the missionaries, while Kekki stated that they listened to all missionaries with suspicion. He knew this because many local people had frankly told him so.[172]

The missionaries' information concerning trust in them is thus mixed but it is possible that both views may have been true, that some missionaries were trusted while others were not, or that they were trusted more at one point in time than at another. There are, naturally, neither materials nor methods available to enable us to estimate quantitatively the extent to which either trust or distrust was prevalent, but if I had to choose which approach was likely to have been more common, or more deep-rooted mentally, among the Ovambo, I would bet on distrust. After all, genuine trust is a mutual feeling, and since the missionaries did not trust the Ovambo, there was no reason why the latter should have truly trusted the missionaries. Furthermore, it would have been rather extraordinary if a relatively large group of people (the missionaries) had been totally trusted by another large group of people (the Ovambo), particularly because, as Kivinen noted, the groups were

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169 Private letter 2 Jan. 1961 from an unnamed woman missionary who had worked in Ovamboland for decades. Quoted in Helander, 2001, p. 72. (Transl. KM)

170 E.g. L. Helenius to K.A. Paasio (?) 15 Aug. 1923, Eac23; L. Koskimaa to M. Tarkkanen 28 June 1930, Eac30; W. Björklund to K.A. Paasio 1 Aug. 1934, Eac35; H. Saari to U. Paunu 30 July 1938 & 11 Sept. 1939, Eac38-39; H. Ranttila's Annual Report 1952 (Eenhana), mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendix 24, Hha24. All in AFMS, NAF. Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 17, 22, 42, Lb, AELCIN;

171 R. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 11 April 1924, Eac24; W. Kivinen to K.A. Paasio 5 Nov. 1934, Eac35; Kivinen, Walde, Raportti lähetysjohtaja Uno Paunulle hänen saapuessaan tarkastusmatkalle Ambomaalle 1937, p. 9–10 and Appendix 1 (Kivinen, "Mistä kenkä puristaa?"), Hhb2. All in AFMS, NAF.

172 A. Kekki's Annual Report 1952, mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendix 29, Hha24 and T. Tirronen's Annual Report 1953 (Oshigambo continuation training school), mmm 12–15 Jan. 1954, Appendix 19, Hha25, AFMS, NAF.

of different cultural backgrounds. But we do not have to satisfy ourselves with purely logical arguments, because there is also some evidence which seems to point towards the prevalence of distrust.

The first point is that teachers and parish elders were unwilling to participate in the surveillance of Christians and therefore withheld information from the missionaries about misbehaviour in the congregations. Such unwillingness was actually not surprising, because some Christians, at least, felt that to peach against one's own people was a very serious offence. Eetu Järvinen lamented in 1926 that the teachers in the Ontananga parish did not want to tell him about the wrongdoings of the rank and file Christians, and that they excused their inactivity by saying that "they did not want to eat their neighbours by the whites."[173] It is interesting that "eating somebody" originally meant killing somebody by witchcraft. It can hardly be said that the missionaries were trusted implicitly by the Ovambo Christians if informing missionaries about the wrongdoings of other Christians was considered equivalent to practising malevolent witchcraft. Thus the teachers' actual message to Järvinen appears to have been that the missionaries should just mind their own business.

This also seems to have been the message conveyed by ordinary Christians, because they, too, withheld information. Contrary to the wishes of the missionaries, they did not actually rush to confess their sins. Alho was forced to face up to this fact in 1926, for example, when his cook, "our best girl", became pregnant. In the ensuing interrogation he found out that she had been having an affair with one boy for years, and that there had also been many other cases of illicit sexual relations. Alho was very disappointed, because none of the culprits had ever confessed their sins to him.[174] He was obviously not alone in his disappointment, because voluntary confession seemed to have been the exception rather than the rule. As Onni Aho put it, "Normally natives do not confess their sins voluntarily. When you accuse them of something, you have to spend days citing your evidence before they admit their offences."[175] If they were finally made to confess, they were then keen to find out who had snitched on them to the missionaries.[176]

There are also a couple of rather amusing little stories which clearly show the limits of the trust placed in missionaries. The first story is from 1938, when Consolidated Diamonds Mines began taking X-rays of its African miners. Many migrant workers refused to be X-rayed because there was a rumour that it makes men impotent. The rumour also spread to Ovamboland, where it took the form of a

173 E. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 6 Nov. 1926, Eac26, AFMS, NAF.

174 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 7 April 1926, Eac26, AFMS, NAF.

175 O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 25 April 1930, Eac30, AFMS, NAF. On the practice of keeping missionaries uninformed, see also O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 15 June 1932, Eac31; W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 12 June 1936 & 8 Nov. 1938, Eac37–38; Tuure Vapaavuori's Annual Report 1935 (Onayena), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 12, Hha14. All in AFMS, NAF. Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 20, Lb, AELCIN; Pöytäkirjoja tehty tarkastustilaisuuksissa Ambomaalla 1925, p. 44 (miss. dir. Tarkkanen's meeting with Elim elders and teachers 15 Aug. 1925), Dga, AELCIN; Matkalla länsiheimojen seurakunnissa [touring the western parishes] 10.5.–15.5.1941, Ombalantu parish inspection 12 June 1941, Daac, AELCIN.

176 A. Glad to K.A. Paasio 8 Dec. 1934, Eac35, AFMS, NAF.

Viktor Alho served for years as the presiding Finnish missionary in Ovamboland, and therefore had a powerful influence on the missionaries' methods of working, their attitudes towards the Ovambo and the evolution of their relationship with the colonial administration. He is seen here together with Tobias Negonja in the Olukonda mission station in 1929. Negonja was one of the first Ovambo converts in the 1880s. (Photo by courtesy of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission)

claim that the missionaries, too, used X-rays against people, or that they had added a secret substance to the Communion wine in order to cause impotence. As a consequence both school attendance and attendance at divine services declined considerably until the missionaries and King Martin of Ondonga were able to convince people that nothing like this was going on.[177]

The second story comes from Uukwanyama. When Erkki Hynönen drove to Okatope church on 2nd March 1960 there was a large group of school children playing nearby, but they fled in panic as soon as they realized that it was Hynönen who was stepping out of the car. Hynönen was bewildered, but the local pastor soon enlightened him. OPO supporters had spread a rumour that whites kill children by poisoning, and that 30 children had already been murdered at one mission school.[178] The fact that such absurd rumours were believed, albeit by children in the second case, shows that basically the Ovambo were quite suspicious of missionaries.

177 V. Alho to U. Paunu 14 March 1938, Eac38; Viktor Alho's Annual Report 1938 (Onayena), mmm 22–23 Feb. 1939, unnumbered appendix, Hha17. Both in AFMS, NAF. See also Cooper, 2001, p. 94.
178 E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 4 March 1960, Eac48, AFMS, NAF.

As far as respect is concerned, it can be said that the missionaries were respected by both Christians and non-Christians, at least before the Second World War. An obvious sign of respect is the fact that many converts took the missionaries' first names as their own baptismal names, and that many early Christians named their children after missionaries. This expressed respect for the missionaries, because in the Ovambo culture namesakes were considered exemplary models for the person being named.[179] But it was not only Christians who adopted the names of missionaries, for several non-Christian headmen in the Oshigambo area in the mid-1920s were said to have children whose name was "Petäjä"[180], named after Kalle Petäjä, who was the missionary in Oshigambo from 1916 to 1923.

Respect for the missionaries was so strong at the beginning of the twentieth century that in some cases people sought their presence as a means of protection. This aspect is evident in a request made by "a representative" of Uukwaluudhi to mission director, Haahti, in 1911 for a missionary to be stationed in his community, or if no missionary could be sent, for missionaries' cattle to graze there. He believed that even the presence of mission cattle would prevent the neighbouring communities from raiding Uukwaluudhi.[181] It was noted also in 1925 that many people in Northern Ondonga would protect their cattle from raiders by taking them to the Oshigambo mission station.[182] This information would indicate that mission sites were regarded as asylums of a kind. In fact, such an attitude had already become evident in 1911 when a man was shot dead by two intruders in the newly founded Onandjokwe hospital. According to Dr. Rainio, the local people were horror-stricken, not because of the murder as such, because it had been a legitimate act of blood vengeance, but because it had taken place in the mission hospital.[183] Rainio's account shows that mission sites were indeed regarded as asylums for offenders in the same way as a king's homestead or a kings' burial place.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the asylum status of mission sites was not always respected. It was not at all uncommon for non-Christian relatives to abduct children from mission stations where they had sought refuge in order to be able to attend school or be baptized.[184] Violence was often used, or at least threatened, when relatives abducted children from mission stations, but it is significant that even in these cases non-Christians very clearly avoided physically at-

179 Aarni, 1982, p. 68; Saarelma-Maunumaa, 1997, p. 71–74.

180 E. Närhi to M. Tarkkanen 16 July 1926, Eac26, AFMS, NAF.

181 Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 30, Lb, AELCIN. This request was not unique. Ordinary people were often keen to persuade missionaries or great men to graze their cattle with their own because it was believed to keep cattle thieves away. (E.Liljeblad to Major Manning 18 July 1916, 4/1916/6, RCO, NAN. See also McKittrick, 2002, p. 70–71.)

182 E. Närhi's Annual Report 1925 (Oshigambo– Oshitayi), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1926, Appendix 15, Hha9, AFMS, NAF.

183 S. Rainio's Annual Report 1911 (Onadjokwe hospital), mmm 18 Jan. 1912, Appendix 3, Hha6; Rainio, Selma, Lääkäri- ja sairashoitotoiminnasta Ovambomaalla, s.d. (but probably 1919), p. 9–10, Hhb2. Both in AFMS, NAF. Later a superhuman aspect was added to the idea of mission hospitals as places of refuge, as it was believed that neither witchcraft nor magic could harm people who were in a European hospital. (Tuupainen, 1970, p. 77.)

184 See chapter "Christians and non-Christians..."

tacking the missionaries.[185] Whether this should be taken as a token of genuine respect, or whether they were just afraid of being punished by the colonial authorities if they used violence against whites is impossible to know, but it is obvious that the Ovambo attitude towards missionaries before World War II was such that the latter did not have to worry about their personal safety. In fact, they seem to have been very safe, because the present material alludes to only two cases in which a missionary's bodily integrity was jeopardized. The first was in 1919, when Mrs Aarni was said to have sustained scratches in the course of one abduction fight, and the second took place in 1931, when shots were fired after Onni Aho from King Iipumbu's homestead.[186]

Respect for the missionaries did not mean that even the Christians were totally obedient to them, however, as clearly indicated by the long-term conflicts over the acceptability of *ohango* and the wedding ox.[187] Neither did it exclude occasional demonstrations of open defiance, as in the mid-1920s, when several old Christians in the western communities were said to have publicly announced that they would eat sacrificial meat and drink beer even though the missionaries had forbidden these things.[188] Furthermore, notwithstanding their respect for the missionaries, the Ovambo did not adopt European customs advocated by them, if they themselves deemed them too alien.[189] Neither did people refrain from occasionally criticizing the behaviour of individual missionaries, nor from making fun of them.[190]

The attitude of the Ovambo towards the missionaries changed considerably after the Second World War, their earlier respect being replaced by criticism. The process of this change can be outlined with a few quotations from the missionaries themselves. In 1941 Juho Syrjä referred to some difficulties which missionaries had had with local people and wrote that a spirit of discord had come to Ovamboland. He had noticed that in particular the Ovambo pastors' attitude towards the missionaries had changed, and predicted that things would soon take a turn for the

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185 See V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 21 July 1919, Eac21; A. Perheentupa to M. Tarkkanen 26 June 1926, Eac26; I. Saukkonen to M. Tarkkanen 28 May 1928, Eac28; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 28 Sept. 1928, Eac28. All in AFMS, NAF.

186 E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 1 Oct 1919, Eac21; O. Aho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30. Both in AFMS, NAF.

187 See chapter five.

188 Alho, Viktor, Kertomus tarkastusmatkasta länsiheimoihin 15–27.6.1926 [Report on inspections of western parishes], Uukwaluudhi inspection, Hha9, AFMS, NAF.

189 Dr. Rainio had an interesting example of this. In an attempt to improve the standard of hygiene, missionaries taught trainee teachers that spoons should be used when eating, and that dishes should be washed. Yet very few Ovambo teachers later followed these instructions, because their fellow countrypeople considered such customs to be tokens of pride and of a desire to imitate the Europeans. (S. Rainio's Annual Report 1923, mmm 8 Jan. 1924, Appendix 9, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.)

190 E.g. M. Rautanen to H. Haahti 6 Dec. 1913, Eac2; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 2 April 1919 & 30 Sept. 1919, Eac21; R. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 14 Feb. 1924, Eac24; V. Alho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 14 Aug. 1928, Eac28; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 2 Nov. 1931, Eac30. All in AFMS, NAF.

worse.[191] A decade later Walde Kivinen made a note of various conflicts which had recently taken place in mission schools and looked on them as results of the intrusion of various "-isms" into Ovamboland which now were changing the spirit of the congregations and "sowing confused feelings" in the minds of leading Christians.[192] Finally, in 1953, Sylvi Kyllönen felt that the situation had become critical. Missionaries whom the Ovambo had earlier admired had fallen from their pedestals and the Africans were now keen on pointing out all the mistakes they had made. She was optimistic about the future, though, and believed that once the present "age of puberty" was passed, the Ovambo would again accept the missionaries as co-workers.[193] But in the meantime there were some people who would no longer hesitate to take their complaints against missionaries to the colonial authorities.[194]

The new attitude was first manifested during the Second World War, as Syrjä's references to difficulties indicate. In 1940 a group of Uukwanyama teachers, led by "two old troublemakers", held two secret meetings and produced an indictment against the missionary Björklund, accusing him of promoting vice and of "unusual preaching". This conflict was soon settled in a meeting with leading missionaries and Kwanyama teachers, but around the same time Björklund also angered the Engela parish elders by making a decision in one divorce case without their consent.[195] Soon after the war Björklund and other missionaries were again targeted, not only by teachers but also by some Kwanyama pastors. This time it was a question of language: the Kwanyama were apparently angered by the missionaries' reluctance to translate the New Testament into Oshikwanyama, which they saw as favouring Oshindonga at the expense of their own language. This language row lasted for some two years (1947–1949), during which time dislike for the missionaries' language policies reached such a pitch that three Lutheran pastors threatened to transfer to the Anglican Church.[196] In Walde Kivinen's opinion the row had been partly caused by the local missionaries' indiscreet behaviour, and he therefore demanded that no hot-tempered, humourless or indiscreet missionaries should be sent to Uukwanyama, because they would only foment Kwanyama nationalism.[197]

The role of the Ovambo teachers in the Uukwanyama disputes shows that they had adopted a critical attitude towards the missionaries. This was also generally evident in Ovamboland in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the missionaries

191 J. Syrjä to U. Paunu 6 Jan. 1941, Eac40, AFMS, NAF.

192 Kivinen, Walde, Raportti allekirjoittaneen matkasta Afrikan sihteerinä Ambomaalle 1949–1950, p. 4, Dgb, AELCIN.

193 Mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953 §7, Hha24, AFMS, NAF.

194 In 1957 five Ovambo members of the Native Commissioner's staff wrote him a letter about how the Finnish mission was undermining traditional customs. They complained, among other things, that the missionaries had forbidden customs which had nothing to do with religion. (Cooper, 2001, p. 254.)

195 A.W. Björklund to U. Paunu 12 Feb. 1940, Eac39, AFMS, NAF.

196 See A. W. Björklund to T. Vapaavuori 30 Dec. 1947, Eac42; V. Alho to T. Vapaavuori 14 May 1948, Eac43; K. Harjanne to T. Vapaavuori 22 April 1948, Eac43; Copy T. Vapaavuori to A. Mutanen 25 May 1948, Eac43; W. Kivinen to T. Vapaavuori 7 Sept. 1949, Eac43. All in AFMS, NAF.

197 W. Kivinen to T. Vapaavuori 30 Dec. 1949, Eac43, AFMS, NAF.

and teachers were engaged in a long and occasionally heated disagreement over teachers' salaries. The problems were basically caused by the complicated system of payment in which part of the salary for a qualified teacher was covered by a government grant to the mission and part was expected to be paid by the congregations. The confusion caused by this system led to a stormy meeting between the missionaries and primary school teachers in January 1948. The teachers maintained that they should also have been paid a full salary by the congregations notwithstanding the government grant, and that it was only because of the missionaries' meanness that they did not get this, while in the missionaries' view, full payments from congregational funds were to be made only to those qualified teachers who taught both in primary schools and in the "congregational schools". Although some teachers were "full of gall", as the school inspector Lindström put it, the conflict did not yet lead to anything more serious than suspicions on the part of the teachers.[198]

The second round in the wage row was more serious. In 1952 the teachers learned that African teachers in the Police Zone were being paid much more than they were, and this led to rumours that the government would have been willing to increase its grant towards teachers' salaries but the mission had rejected it. This rumour was correct. The other version, the incorrect one, claimed that the government had increased its grant but the missionaries had used it for their own purposes. Liina Lindström was not very successful when she tried to build up the teachers' trust in the missionaries, and there was said to have been support for a strike among them.[199] The accusations against the missionaries were repeated the following year, and the teachers' dissatisfaction grew. In May a group of them held a meeting, which forced the colonial administration to intervene, and a new solution was worked out, in which the missionaries accepted an increased grant for qualified teachers while the administration made a small grant available for the salaries of unqualified teachers.[200] Although the 1953 solution brought the teachers a considerable wage increase, not all of them were happy with their position as mission employees. This was manifested in 1955, when Hendrik Verwoerd, the South African minister for Bantu administration and development, visited Ovamboland. A group of Kwanyama teachers handed him a petition asking the government to take over the schools from the FMS, but the request was refused as being premature.[201]

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198 V. Alho to T. Vapaavuori 30 March 1948 & 4 Dec. 1948; L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 31 Jan. 1948 & 7 March 1948. All in Eac43, AFMS, NAF.

199 L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori and W. Kivinen 23 Jan. 1953, Eac45; B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1952 (general report) & L. Lindström's Annual Report 1952 (schools), mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendices 1 & 19, Hha24. All in AFMS, NAF. (The missionaries had rejected the government proposal for an increased grant because it would have made the difference in wages between qualified and unqualified teachers too wide, the latter being paid from congregational funds only.)

200 See B. Eriksson to T. Vapaavuori 8 June 1953, Eac45; L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 9 July 1953 & 15 Aug. 1953 E.J. Pentti to T. Vapaavuori 4 May 1953 & 20 May 1953, Eac45; Minutes of the field administration board 18 June 1953 §11, Hha24; B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1953 (general report) & L. Lindström's Annual Report 1953 (schools), mmm 12–15 Jan. 1954, Appendices 1 & 20, Hha25. All in AFMS, NAF.

201 S. Kyllönen to O. Vuorela 12 Aug. 1955, Eac46 & S. Kyllönen's Annual Report 1955 (schools), mmm 10–12 Jan. 1956, Appendix 3, Hha27, AFMS, NAF.

The teachers' attitude towards their work, and towards the missionaries, had changed noticeably since the early 1930s, for instance, when the missionaries could still write in praise of the teachers' dedication to their work.[202] The idealism of the teaching profession had obviously vanished, and teaching had become like any other job. In the process, the teachers had also changed from obedient mission servants to mission employees having a conventional relation to their employer. They wanted an adequate financial reward for their professional skills, and in seeking this they were even ready, as the 1955 petition shows, to play the government card against their employer.

It was not only the teachers who adopted a new attitude towards the missionaries, however, for the pupils at post-primary schools also did so. They became disobedient. Missionaries who were heads of secondary schools quite often had to report that their pupils were unruly, or that the spirit in the school was bad and the pupils opposed their teachers, etc.[203] But that was not all. Occasionally this "bad spirit" turned into open conflicts, as the following listing of incidents which took place in schools under missionary management shows: 1948 Engela boys' school ("rebellion" of second-year pupils), 1949 Oniipa teacher training school (quarrel over school meals), 1950 Oshigambo girls' school (pupils' "rebellion" and walk-out), 1950 Engela boys' school ("rebellion" because of new school rules and walk-out because of "an insignificant medical matter"), 1950 Ongandjera girls' school (hunger strike), 1952 Oniipa teacher training school (various conflicts, including a public reproach delivered by the pupils against the headmaster), 1953 Engela boys' school (quarrel over toilet facilities), 1953 Ombalantu boys' school (quarrel over school meals), 1954 Engela boys' school (ten-day study strike of first and second-year pupils), 1955 Engela girls' school (walk-outs because of reproaches by a teacher), 1956 Ongwediva teacher training school (walk-out), and 1962 Ongwediva teacher training school (one-week "rebellion", reason not given).[204]

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202 E.g. O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 25 April 1930, Eac30; H. Ranttila's Annual Report 1932 (Ondonga schools) & J. Syrjä's Annual Report 1932 (Uukwanyama schools) & O. Suikkanen's Annual Report 1932 (Okahao), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendices 13, 15 and 23, Hha12. All in AFMS, NAF.

203 E.g. J. Syrjä to T. Vapaavuori 27 Feb. 1947, Eac42; E.J. Pentti to T. Vapaavuori 4 April 1953, Eac45; E. Hatakka to O. Vuorela 21 Nov. 1955, Eac46; J. Syrjä's Annual Report 1941 (Ongwediva school), mmm 21–22 Jan. 1942, Appendix 31, Hha19; E.J. Pentti's Annual Report 1951 (Oniipa teacher training school), mmm 24–25 Jan. 1952, Appendix 4, Hha23; E. Hatakka's Annual Report 1960 (Ongwediva teacher training school), mmm 17–19 Jan. 1961, Appendix 15, Hha32. All in AFMS, NAF.

204 A. Ripatti to T. Vapaavuori 11 Sept. 1950, Eac44; J. Hopeasalmi's Annual Report 1948 (Engela boys' school), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1949, Appendix 28, Hha21; E.J. Pentti's Annual Report 1949 (Oniipa teacher training school), mmm 25–26 Jan. 1950, Appendix 3, Hha22; H. Haapanen's Annual Report 1950 (Oshigambo girls' school), mmm 24–25 Jan. 1951, Appendix 17, Hha22; M. Rantanen's Annual Report 1950 (Engela boys' school), mmm 24–25 Jan. 1951, Appendix 26, Hha22; E.J. Pentti's Annual Report 1952 (Oniipa teacher training school), mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendix 5, Hha24; A. Kekki's Annual Report 1953 (Engela boys' school), mmm 12–15 Jan. 1954, Appendix 26, Hha25; T. Saarinen's Annual Report 1953 (Ombalantu), mmm 12–15 Jan. 1954, Appendix 36, Hha25; U. Poikolainen's Annual Report 1954 (Engela boys' school), mmm 19–20 Jan, 1955, Appendix 14, Hha26; K. Poikolainen's Annual Report 1955 (Engela girls' school), mmm 10–12 Jan. 1956, Appendix 36, Hha27; U. Poikolainen's Annual Report 1956 (Ongwediva teacher training school), mmm 9–12 Jan. 1957, Appendix 14, Hha28; M. Ihamäki's Annual Report 1962 (Ongwediva teacher training school), mmm 29–31 March 1963, unnumbered appendix, hha34. All in AFMS, NAF.

Two of the above conflicts (Oniipa 1949 and Ongwediva 1956) were reported in more detail than the others and may therefore serve as examples of the issues which made younger members of the Christian elite openly stand up to the missionaries. The conflict in Oniipa began at the beginning of July 1949 when the pupils complained that the steward of the school was not only rude but also did not do his work properly, and therefore the school meals were inadequate and unequally distributed. Elias Pentti, the headmaster, promised to investigate the allegations, and some week later he informed pupils that some minor irregularities had been found in the steward's work and that he had been warned to be more careful. The pupils were not satisfied, and a couple of days later they invited Pentti to a meeting, made new allegations against the steward and told Pentti that they would leave the school unless he was dismissed. Pentti explained that there were no grounds for dismissal and asked the pupils not to leave before the field administration board had had a chance to consider the matter. When members of the field board came to the school a few days later they gave the pupils a moral lecture and informed them that mission employees are not dismissed according to pupils' wishes and that those who were not happy with this could leave the school. Several pupils indeed resigned, only to return a few days later.[205]

The conflict in Ongwediva had more serious consequences. It all began when three pupils were expelled for having been intoxicated and the rest of the pupils demanded their reinstatement. The headmaster, Urho Poikolainen, refused to do this and most of the pupils left the school, more than one third of them for good.[206] This conflict shows that young educated Christians were no longer willing to accept the missionaries' moral decisions without question, nor would they hesitate to put pressure on the missionaries in order to ensure acceptable decisions, even in minor matters, as the Oniipa case shows.

The missionaries' documents contain plenty of information concerning the new critical attitudes adopted by teachers and secondary school pupils, because these were Africans with whom the missionaries still had first-hand contacts even when the congregations had been handed over to Ovambo pastors. There is much less information available on the extent to which the rank and file Christians began seeing missionaries in a critical light, although the missionaries do note that their "lavish" lifestyle with canned food and sugar caused irritation among the Africans.[207] This indicates that there may have been at least some critical attitudes among the ordinary Christians too. The same thing is indicated by the missionaries' lamentations that "neo-paganism" was on the rise among Christians after the war.[208] The apparent re-appraisal of non-Christian values means that people took

205 Pentti, Elias, Kertomus Oniipan seminaarissa heinäkuussa 1949 sattuneista tapahtumista (13 July 1949) [Report on incidents at Oniipa school in July 1949], Eac43, AFMS, NAF.

206 U. Poikolainen to O. Vuorela 30 Sept 1956, Eac47 & U. Poikolainen's Annual Report 1956 (Ongwediva teacher training school), mmm 9–12 Jan. 1957, Appendix 14, Hha28, AFMS, NAF.

207 Mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953 §7, Hha24, AFMS, NAF. The lifestyle of some missionaries was also mentioned as an object of criticism by Efraim Angula (interviewed on 17 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga).

208 See chapter "The endproduct..."

up a more critical attitude towards the missionaries' views on proper Christian behaviour. Furthermore, judging by the general remarks which missionaries made about people's attitudes, it can be assumed that critical attitudes were emerging among the rank and file, although they were probably not quite as widespread as among the educated elite. This interpretation is supported by the remark of Efraim Angula that people had originally had a very high regard for the missionaries and looked on them as almost holy, but that they lost some of that high regard in the course of time.[209] On the other hand, according to Frans Kaukondi, ordinary Christians still had a very high regard for the missionaries in the 1960s, while in Titus Ngula's opinion respect for them first began to wane in the 1970s.[210]

An important consequence of the Christians' critical attitude towards the missionaries was the granting of independence to the Ovambo-Kavango Church in 1955.[211] Although the missionaries' aim had been to create an independent African church, this would probably not yet have taken place in 1955 had there not been criticism of the missionaries. The connection between the critical attitude of the Ovambo Christians and the granting of independence to the church is never very clearly expressed in the documents, but it can be deduced particularly from the writings of the mission director, Tuure Vapaavuori. He was still able to write in 1947 that because of "attacks by the forces of darkness" the missionaries were needed more than ever and it would be a mistake to withdraw.[212] Six years later his opinion had changed, however, and the process of forming the Ovambo Church into an officially recognized indigenous church had started[213]. Vapaavuori referred to the Ovambo pastors' urge for independence and pointed out that the FMS should avoid the mistake which the Rhenish mission was about to make in the Police Zone, i.e. that the missionaries might try to remain as "fathers and mothers" for too long and face a rebellion by their "children".[214] In other words, Vapaavuori was afraid that if the Ovambo were not given more independence within the church, they might aim at establishing a church of their own. A similar fear had been expressed a little earlier by Walde Kivinen.[215] Again the following year, after his inspection visit to Ovamboland, Vapaavuori referred to "the general opinion"

209 Efraim Angula, interviewed on 17 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga.

210 Frans Kaukondi, interviewed on 7 Dec. 1998 at Onemanya, Ongandjera; Titus Ngula, interviewed on 19 Nov. 1998 at Oshitayi, Ondonga.

211 Cf. Katjavivi, 1989 (a), p. 32.

212 Copy T. Vapaavuori to K. Petäjä 11 July 1947, Eac42, AFMS, NAF.

213 Minutes of the field administration board 9 Jan. 1953 §7, Hha24, AFMS, NAF; Minutes of the board of directors of the FMS 12 May 1953 §17, Serie N, AELCIN.

214 Copies T. Vapaavuori to B. Eriksson 9 April 1953 and to L. Lindström 13 April 1953, Eac45, AFMS, NAF. See also copy of T. Vapaavuori to L. Lindström 19 Aug. 1953, Eac45, AFMS, NAF.

215 Kivinen, who was the secretary for African work at the mission HQ, wrote to the missionaries in 1951 emphasizing the need to intensify the education of African church leaders. He referred to worrying signs that missionary work in Africa might soon become impossible. It was therefore important that the missionaries realized that "the sooner we understand that we should withdraw from prominent positions of leadership, the longer we will actually be allowed to lead". To Kivinen's mind, it was best for the missionaries to start their withdrawal before the "bad days" caused any unpleasant surprises. (W. Kivinen's circular to missionaries, January 1951, series N, AELCIN.)

that missionaries did not have much time left in Africa, and emphasised therefore the urgency of registering the Ovambo-Kavango Church.[216] Professor Mikko Juva, chairman of the board of directors of the FMS, also referred to a link between the Christians' critical attitude towards the missionaries and the granting of independence to the Ovambo church. With the benefit of hindsight, he stated in 1961 that this had been the right decision in view of what had happened in the Rhenish mission church.[217]

The obvious question now is why the Christians' attitude towards the missionaries became more critical after World War II. I think it was to a considerable extent a reflection of the new approach towards the whites which became prevalent among the African population over the whole continent with the "Wind of Change"[218] after the war, and which was manifested in SWA by labour disturbances at the mines and by the problems which the Rhenish missionaries had with their Christians in the Police Zone, for example. But the Wind of Change is not the whole answer. There were also some local reasons which contributed to the growth of animosity towards the missionaries.

One factor which was probably important as an initial impetus for the critical attitude was the participation of Ovambo men in the war efforts of the British Empire. Between late 1941 and early 1943 thousands of Ovambo, the majority of them from Uukwanyama, were recruited into the Native Military Corps for auxiliary military service in South Africa.[219] When these soldiers returned home they became a disturbing element in the congregations because they spread an "unchristian" or

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216 Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 20 kesäkuuta – 20 joulukuuta 1954, p. 69, Dga, AELCIN.

217 Juva, Mikko, Matkakertomus käynnistä...Afrikassa olevilla työaloilla kesällä 1961, p. 7–8, Dga, AELCIN.

218 "The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and, whether we like it or not, this growth of [African] national consciousness is a political fact." (British prime minister Harold Macmillan in the South African parliament 3 Feb. 1960)

219 NCO Annual Report 1942, p. 28, 36, 11/1, NAO, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1943, p. 16, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Gordon, 1993, p. 153-154, 156. ** The actual number of recruits is not clear. According to NCO Hahn's report of 1942, some 3,000 men were recruited during that year, while the missionary Björklund says that the number of Kwanyama recruits in 1942 alone was around 3,000. The highest figure of total recruitment which has been given is 7,000. (See NCO Annual Report 1942, p. 28; A. W. Björklund's Annual Report 1942 (Engela), mmm 20-21 Jan. 1943, Appendix 19, Hha20, AFMS, NAF; Gordon, 1993, p. 156, fn. 38.) ** The number of recruits is not the only unclear issue surrounding the NMC. The other open question is the extent to which coercion was used in recruitment. McKittrick emphasizes the Ovambos' unwillingness to join the NMC voluntarily, which led the colonial authorities to use coercive methods. On the other hand, Hileni Elago, basing her analysis on interviews with four ex-servicemen, claims that "[t]o suggest that people who joined the war from Ovamboland were forced to do so would be far from the truth. To say they were encouraged to is much closer to the truth...". Elago's view is slightly more credible than McKittrick's in the light of a report by Suoma Hirvonen in which she noted the men's fears of forced recruitment but stated that nobody had been compelled to join up. Her view is probably fairly reliable, because as school inspector for Uukwanyama, she toured around and would have had first-hand contacts with large numbers of people. (See S. Hirvonen's Annual Report 1942 [Uukwanyama schools], mmm 20–21 Jan. 1943, Appendix 20, Hha20, AFMS, NAF; McKittrick, 1995, p. 187–188; Elago, 1997, p. 20; McKittrick, 2002, p. 226.)

"secular" spirit and had "new ideas",[220] one of which was disrespect for all authorities, not only for traditional African authorities but also for the colonial administration. In fact, according to Robert Gordon, this attitude was the reason why recruitment to the NMC was suddenly terminated and the demobilisation of soldiers begun in 1943.[221] It is quite probable that, once back home, the ex-soldiers turned this disrespect for the European authorities against the authorities of the church (i.e. the missionaries), too, and that their new attitude also spread among the rest of the Christians.

The recruitment of Ovambo men into the NMC may also have had an indirect effect on the emergence of a critical attitude towards the missionaries, in that the soldiers' pay was quite good. Depending on their rank, they earned something like £3–5 a month, which was well above anything they could have earned as migrant labourers. One third of this was paid directly to the soldier, while the rest had to be sent to an entrusted person at home.[222] This meant that there was a considerable inflow of cash into Ovamboland. According to Hahn's estimates, military pay brought in something like £6,000 to £8,000 a month in 1942 and 1943, more than twice the total sum brought in by migrant labourers during the whole of 1937.[223] In short, the Ovambo temporarily became richer at the same time as the Finnish missionaries became poorer, as they were cut off from their financial sources in the home country because of the war. Although they received some assistance from the USA, South Africa, Sweden and the Reformed Church of SWA, they were still living under economically stringent conditions. Salaries occasionally had to be cut down to a half of normal, and the functioning of mission institutions such as schools became more dependent on contributions from Ovambo Christians.[224] All

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220 V. Alho's Annual Report 1943 (general report), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1944, unnumbered appendix, Hha20; H. Kupila's Annual Report 1944 (Ondonga schools), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1945, Hha20; H. Saari's Annual Report 1945 (Oshigambo–Oshitayi), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1946, Appendix 14, Hha20; S. Hirvonen's Annual Report 1945 (Uukwanyama schools), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1946, Appendix 18, Hha20. All in AFMS, NAF. V. Alho to T. Vapaavuori 10 Dec. 1946 (Silmäys Olukondan, Ontanagan ja Onajenan seurakuntien tilanteeseen vuosina 1938–1945) [A glance at the situation in Olukonda, Ontananga and Onayena parishes 1938–1945], Daac, AELCIN.

221 Gordon, 1993, p. 159–161. See also Emmett, 1999, p. 268.

222 Gordon, 1993, p. 157; Elago, 1997, p. 22.

223 NCO Annual Report 1942, p. 10–11 & NCO Annual Report 1943, p. 4, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Gordon, 1993, p. 157. Missionaries also noted this inflow of cash and the occasional "lavish" use of it. (See A. W. Björklund to U. Paunu 19 April 1945, Eac41; V. Alho's Annual Report 1943 (Olukonda, Ontanaga, Onayena) & S. Aarni's Annual Report 1943 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1944, Appendices 2 and 35, Hha20; H. Kupila's Annual Report 1944 (schools) & S. Hirvonen's Annual report 1944 (Uukwanyama schools), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1945, Appendices 4 and 21, Hha20. All in AFMS, NAF.)

224 See e.g. V. Alho to U. Paunu 29 Jan. 1940, Eac39; Memo about the information received from V. Alho (by radio) 10 April 1942, Eac40; Copy V. Alho to rev. A. Holmio (Quincy, Mass.) 13 March 1943, Eac40; Minutes of the field administration board 19 Dec. 1939 §7, Hha17; Minutes of the field administration board 15 May 1940 §2 and 21 Aug. 1940 §4, Hha18; V. Alho's Annual Report 1940 (general report), mmm 22–23 Jan. 1941, Appendix 1, Hha19; A.W. Björklund's Annual Report 1941 (Engela), mmm 21–22 Jan. 1942, Appendix 23, Hha19; V. Alho's Annual Report 1942 (general report), mmm 20–21 Jan. 1943, Appendix 2, Hha19; Minutes of the field administration board 27 Nov. 1942 §5, Hha20; V. Alho's Annual Report 1943 (general report) & S. Aarni's Annual Report 1943 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1944, unnumbered appendix and appendix 35, Hha20; V. Alho's Annual Report 1944 (general report), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1945, Appendix 1, Hha20; Short statistics, Finnish Mission 1944 and 1945, Hha20. All in AFMS, NAF.

this meant that the missionaries were deposed from their earlier heights of being regarded as rich people, and the common Christians no longer had to look up to them in an economic sense. This lowered the threshold for openly criticizing them.

There may also have been a third cause for the emergence of a critical attitude that had nothing to do with developments outside Ovamboland, but rather with the changing age structure within the Christian community. At this point we need to know one thing which will be discussed in detail later, the fact that mass conversions to Christianity began in the early 1920s and the bulk of the converts appear to have been young people in their late teens and early twenties.[225] In due course these converts married and had children, the older ones among whom were in their teens and twenties in the 1940s. This means that the proportion of young Christians, who had not themselves converted but had been baptized when being children, became bigger within the Christian Ovambo community. In other words, there was a "youth bulge" of born Christians in Ovamboland in the 1940s. In his celebrated book "*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*", Samuel P. Huntington describes similar youth bulges and sees them as an important precondition for protests and reforms, because young people are generally protagonists in protests, instability, reform and revolution. As they become proportionally stronger because of their increasing number, there is a possibility that their protest and desire for reforms will become manifested. This happened in Europe in the 1960s, for example, when the post-war baby boom generation reached its teens and began questioning the values of their parents by adopting radical left-wing ideals.[226] It is quite possible that the youth bulge generation of Christian Ovamboland in the 1940s was doing the same thing as their European counterparts twenty years later, i.e. becoming critical of their parents' values. One important part of these values was the Christian faith, and since the missionaries were leading people who embodied this faith, the young Christians began criticizing them, too.

It is possible to find some information in the missionaries' records to support the youth bulge hypothesis. Kalle Himanen wrote from Ombalantu in 1946, for example, that the Mbalantu had only recently begun converting and that, unlike the situation in other communities, there was no hostility to missionaries in Ombalantu but he expected that it would emerge "during the next generation".[227] Thus, there was no youth bulge in Ombalantu and no hostility, while in other communities it was the younger Christians in particular whom the missionaries regarded as the worrying element. Their concern that young Christians were becoming "proud" or "wild" was already evident in 1946 when the mission director, Tuure Vapaavuori, visited Ovamboland, as the missionaries at the meetings which he had with teachers and parish elders were constantly warning the older Christians not to allow such "wild" behaviour, because it endangered the Christian

225 See chapter "Conversion to Christianity..."

226 See Huntington, 1996, p. 117–118.

227 Himanen, Kalle, Kertomus lähetystyöstä Ombalantussa ja Okalongossa 1935–1946 [Report on mission work in Ombalantu and Okalongo 1935–1946], Hha21, AFMS, NAF.

spirit.[228] Vapaavuori again had to make some unpleasant observations about the young people during his next visit in 1954, expressing his regret that they admired secular education more they did Christian education. He also noted that their knowledge of Christian doctrines had become far less satisfactory since his last inspection. In particular, he was worried about the influence of the young men who went to work in the Police Zone and adopted "arrogant" ideas that were opposed to order and Christian customs. These young men then spread their "poison" among the rest of the young people back home and attempted to make themselves "leaders of the congregations".[229]

The fact that the young people were the source of troubles was also noted by the missionaries at a more general level. When they discussed their relations with Africans at their annual meeting in 1953 they noted that the problems were caused by "Christians of the third generation",[230] i.e. those "who begin to admire heathenism, because they themselves have not been living in the terrors of it"[231] . Sometimes, however, it was "the second-generation Christians", as when Antti Kekki was explaining why all kinds of un-Christian behaviour had spread among Ovambo Christians since the war:

> "It is connected with the problem of the second generation, which consists of the children of converts. Because their parents are Christians, they have been free from the laws of heathenism, but at the same time, they do not feel themselves to be bound by God's Commandments. They have been baptised and made members of the congregation, but unlike their fathers, they have not enclosed God's mercy in their hearts."[232]

The rather general comments by Vapaavuori and others quoted above indicate that the missionaries regarded the younger Christians as the avant-garde of anti-Christian and anti-missionary feelings. If not necessarily anti-Christian, they do appear to have been forerunners of a critical attitude towards the mission, as indicated by the many conflicts in schools.

The missionaries' conflicts with teachers and pupils became less frequent after the mid-1950s, and a period of relative calm returned. But that was just the calm before the storm, for the low point in missionary-Ovambo relations was reached at around 1960, when the first phase of Ovambo political activism began. Although critical attacks on missionaries were organized by just a few people at this point,

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228 Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan ja Okavangon lähetysalueilla pidetyistä tarkastuksista 1946, p. 2, 9–10, 12, 18, 22, 24–25, 34, 39, 41, Daac, AELCIN.

229 Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani Afrikan työaloillemme ja Israeliin 20 kesäkuuta – 20 joulukuuta 1954, p. 60, 64–65, 84, 93, Dga, AELCIN.

230 Mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953 §7, Hha24, AFMS, NAF. See also T. Vapaavuori to the Board of Directors of the FMS 2 July 1946, Eac41, AFMS, NAF.

231 Copy Presiding missionary W. Kivinen to the Secretary for SWA 8 March 1937, Eaj, AELCIN.

232 Kekki, 1964, p. 39. (Transl. KM)

apparently supported by a minority of Christians[233], the nature of the criticism, and the acts perpetrated against the missionaries, were so pointed that they can no longer be called just mere disrespect. It was now anger which was coming to the surface, particularly in Uukwanyama.

The supporters of the early liberation movement made various allegations against the missionaries, the most wide spread of which was the claim that they either used the money obtained in parish fees for their own luxuries or had it sent to Finland.[234] This accusation seems to have been believed by many, in particular by the migrant labourers. Not only did Jalmari Marttunen constantly face suspicious questions about the finances of the church when he had meetings with Ovambo workers in the Police Zone, but men back home were also said to have been reluctant to pay their church fees because of the OPO propaganda.[235] The other main accusation against missionaries was that they tried to hamper the activities of the liberation movement. Activists claimed that missionaries tried to stop OPO fundraising and actively assisted the colonial authorities in arresting political speakers.[236] The accusations were in a way correct as far as fundraising was concerned, as the missionaries opposed fundraising meetings if they were organized at church or school sites.[237] There was also a third, quite fantastic, accusation, however, that one of the missionaries had travelled to New York to speak evil of the Ovambo at the United Nations.[238]

Apart from accusations, there were also occasional threats, basically saying that the missionaries should go home or else.... At first these were rather unspecific, as when "Mr Hamutukulula" referred to the war between King Mandume and the South Africans back in 1917, and warned that the missionaries' acts might bring about a return to something like that. Around the same time Sam Nujoma also warned the missionaries not to interfere with OPO activities, otherwise the OPO would take further steps against them.[239] There were also threatening rumours, like the one in 1960 claiming that preparations were being made to burn down the

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233 It is impossible to estimate how large a proportion of the Ovambo Christians supported the OPO campaign against missionaries, as the missionaries did not have any exact information about OPO supporters among Christians. Only Erkki Hynönen made some vague guesses about the situation in Uukwanyama in 1960, according to which some 60 per cent of Kwanyama men may have supported the OPO, evidently including quite a few supporters among the parish elders. He also suspected that a couple of Kwanyama pastors might have secretly supported the movement. (E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 25 April 1960 and 8 Aug. 1960, Eac48, AFMS, NAF.)

234 A. Hukka to O. Vuorela 4 Feb. 1960, Eac48; Copy OPO Tsumeb Branch to E. Hynönen 22 Feb. 1960, Eac48; E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 8 Aug. 1960;Eac48; J. Marttunen's Annual Report 1960 (Police Zone), mmm 17–19 Jan. 1961, Appendix 20, Hha32. All in AFMS, NAF.

235 J. Marttunen's circular no. 2 to dear friends [in Finland] 25 April 1960 and B. Eriksson to O. Vuorela 12 June 1960, Eac48, AFMS, NAF.

236 Copy Mr Hamutukulula to E. Hynönen 19 Nov. 1959; Copy OPO Tsumeb Branch to E. Hynönen 22 Feb. 1960; E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 4 July 1960. All in Eac48, AFMS, NAF.

237 E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 18 Dec. 1959, 25 April 1960 and 15 Jan. 1961, Eac48–49, AFMS, NAF.

238 A. Hukka to O. Vuorela 4 Feb. 1960 and E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 4 March 1960, Eac48, AFMS, NAF.

239 Copy Mr Hamutukulula to E. Hynönen 19 Nov. 1959; Copy S. Nujoma's telegram to E. Hynönen 21 Nov. 1959; See also Copy OPO Tsumeb Branch to E. Hynönen 22 Feb. 1960. All in Eac48, AFMS, NAF.

homesteads of the traditional leaders and the government and mission stations. The Engela missionaries at least took the threat seriously, and organized a guard at their station.[240] At the same time the threats became more specific, and Erkki Hynönen received a poem which informed him that he would soon be slaughtered.[241] The threat of violence against missionaries was not just words, as shown by the "Engela intrusion", when five armed men broke into the Engela mission station on the evening of 2nd January 1961 and held Erkki Hynönen hostage for an hour. When they left, they threatened that they would return within a week to kill either Hynönen or some of the other Finnish missionaries. The threat was again taken seriously. Hynönen reported the incident to the colonial authorities, who sent a police detachment from the Police Zone to guard Engela.[242]

After the "Engela intrusion" things cooled down in Uukwanyama. Hynönen could already report during the latter part of 1960 that more and more Kwanyama Christians were beginning to think that the OPO was going too far and that the harassment of missionaries was not acceptable. Furthermore, after the Engela incident some of the OPO leaders came to apologize to Hynönen.[243] Soon after that Hynönen returned to Finland and there was nothing more to report from Uukwanyama. This does not mean that cordial relations existed between the missionaries and the OPO/SWAPO supporters, but at least there were no more threats reported. SWAPO accusations against missionaries continued at least up to 1965, however.[244] Similarly the calming of the situation in Uukwanyama did not mean that the missionaries felt safe there. They were still concerned about their safety, and in 1961 they applied for, and received, an extra grant from the missionary society for radio links to connect the mission stations. They also worked out a plan of action in case of possible situations of serious unrest.[245]

The causes of anti-missionary feelings during the early liberation struggle were again basically well beyond the missionaries' control. The political activists had apparently formed an opinion that all whites were enemies, including the missionaries, and this was probably fuelled further by the missionaries' understandable reluctance to allow church and school sites to be used for political meetings. In other words, the missionaries were attacked not because of what they had done, but because of what they were. On the other hand, it must be stated that the situation in Uukwanyama would probably not have become quite as tense as it did if the local missionary there had been somebody other than Erkki Hynönen. He was not a man of compromises, and was therefore disliked by many. He had already angered many Kwanyama teachers and pastors well before the emergence of political activ-

240 E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 4 July 1960, Eac48, AFMS, NAF.

241 E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 4 July 1960 and 8 Aug. 1960, Eac48, AFMS, NAF.

242 E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 15 Jan. 1961, Eac49, AFMS, NAF.

243 E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 8 Aug 1960, 4 Dec. 1960 and 23 Jan. 1961, Eac48–49, AFMS, NAF.

244 A. Hukka to O. Vuorela 20 April 1962, Eac49; Copy O. Vuorela to A. Eirola 23 Sept. 1965, Eac50; A. Hukka's Annual Report 1962 (general report), mmm 29–31 March 1963, Appendix 1, Hha34. All in AFMS, NAF. Soiri & Peltola, 1999, p. 60.

245 Mmm 2–4 June 1961 §12; Minutes of the field administration board 7 Aug. 1961 §7 and 9 Nov. 1961 §4. All in Hha32, AFMS, NAF.

ism with his drive for a unified Ovambo language, which was seen by many as an attempt to annihilate Oshikwanyama.[246] His fierce advocacy of teetotalism and his way of speaking "like a white ruler" similarly made many people dislike him.[247]

The whole question of mutual trust and respect may be summed up by stating that the missionaries never really grew to respect the Ovambo because of their own cultural arrogance. Neither had they much trust in them at first, although some trust was shown particularly from the 1930s onwards. In some cases this trust was not based on genuine feeling, however, but was simply a reaction to the Ovambo Christians' attitudes towards the missionaries. The Ovambo respected the missionaries at first, but this feeling waned, particularly after the Second World War. As far as Ovambo attitudes towards the missionaries are concerned, there is also some evidence that these involved a fair share of underlying distrust.

246 See Copy T. Vapaavuori and W. Kivinen to E. Hynönen 4 Sept. 1952, Eac45; Copy E. Hynönen to B. Eriksson 16 June 1953, Eac45; E. Hynönen to T. Vapaavuori 22 Sept. 1953, Eac45; E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 2 Feb. 1959, Eac48. All in AFMS, NAF.

247 Efraim Angula, interviewed on 17 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga. On Hynönen's fierce support for teetotalism as a cause of dislike, see also A. Hukka to O. Vuorela 31 Dec. 1959 and E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 29 Dec. 1959, Eac48, AFMS, NAF.

Conversion

Theories of conversion

The first task of any scholar studying conversion to Christianity in Africa is to define what is meant by the term "conversion". This is not necessarily an easy task, because there seems to be no unambiguous or generally accepted definition for conversion. Thus scholars have used various definitions and have been criticized by others for using insufficient or incorrect definitions.

One early definition of conversion was formulated in the 1930s by A.D. Nock, who claimed that there are two ways in which people change their religious allegiances. The first, which he called adhesion, is a situation in which people adopt new dogmas and forms of worship from a world religion without making a decisive switch of allegiance and without abandoning the practices and ideas of their original religion, i.e. it means a change from traditional religion to "mixed Christianity". This adhesion Nock contrasted with conversion, which is a "deliberate turning from indifference or from an earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right".[1] Therefore proper conversion, according to Nock, always includes a personal conviction that the adopted religion is the only true one and excludes other forms of worship and possibly also other frameworks for explaining the world.

Another effort to define conversion was made in the 1970s by Humphrey Fisher, who noted that the concept of conversion can be used to describe two kinds of changes in an individual's religious development:

1) The exchange of one faith (or none) for another.

2) The exchange of indifference and dilution for fervency within the same faith.[2]

These definitions again show how difficult a concept conversion is. His first definition, which could be called "first conversion", defines it as it would be defined by a non-scholar or Webster's dictionary, while his "second conversion" describes a change which would normally be called religious revivalism. It should also be noted that Fisher does not think that his first conversion necessarily means a conversion to the orthodoxy of the new religion, and therefore it can come rather close to what Nock meant by adhesion.

It should be noted that in both Nock's and Fisher's definition conversion has two components, i.e. membership of a religious community (religious affiliation) and religious conviction. If we combine these in different ways, we get three possible definitions of conversion:

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1 Quoted in Fisher, 1973, p. 33.

2 Fisher, 1973, p. 36.

1) Change of affiliation without any (appreciable) change of conviction.
2) Change of affiliation with change of conviction, a combination of Fisher's first and second types of conversion.
3) Change of conviction without change of affiliation, i.e. Fisher's second conversion.[3]

The first of these can be considered the minimum satisfactory analytic definition of conversion. Even though some scholars seem to disagree in this respect[4], I will use the minimum definition here. Thus I use the word convert to mean an Ovambo who was baptised into Christianity as a grown-up, or as a teenager (or even as a child) independently of his or her parents' religious affiliation, i.e a person who made his or her own decision to become a member of the Christian community. This definition obviously leaves much to be desired, but it is in practice the only objective and unambiguous one, because of the limitations of the source material. Although there is some general information available about changes of conviction among the new Christians, there is nothing which would enable me to estimate the thoroughness of the Christian conviction of each individual who was baptised. It is therefore quite impossible to pick out those of the baptised who were converts in a sense that they had truly adopted the Christian conviction from those who had merely changed their religious affiliation. Besides, if a convert is defined as a person whose religious conviction has changed, then the next question that should be asked is obvious: What is the minimum level of change in conviction that justifies calling a person a convert? I don't think such level can objectively be specified. Thus, for the present purposes at least, defining a convert in any other way than simply as a new adult member of the Christian community would lead to deadlock.

The various scholars seem to agree on one thing: there must always be some kind of change (social, political, economic, spiritual etc.) going on in the community where conversion to a world religion takes place. Beyond this starting-point they disagree on the causes and processes of conversion and have put forward several explanatory frameworks or theories. Emefie Ikenga-Metuh grouped the theories of conversion to world religions in Africa into four categories: 1) The Shattered Mi-

3 Ikenga-Metuh, 1987, p. 20 (the word "appreciable" in brackets and the references to Fisher are my additions).

4 I have to make my own interpretation here of what some researchers have written. Caroline Ifeka-Moller seems to consider the definition of conversion based on membership of a religious community to be the only objective definition. Similarly, Ulrich Luig appears to regard such a definition as the only researchable one, while Robert Hefner seems to accept this minimum definition, provided that the new religious community becomes the primary group of social identification and moral authority for the convert. On the other hand, David Snow, Richard Machalek, Norman Etherington, Emefie Ikenga-Metuh and Meredith McKittrick seem to deem the minimum definition based on religious affiliation inadequate. The last-mentioned has pointed out that defining conversion as joining established churches ignores those people who may have adopted so much of the Christian ideals that they are *de facto* Christians, but for some reason have not formally joined any church. (See Ifeka-Moller, 1974, p. 57; Snow & Machalek, 1984, p. 171; Ikenga-Metuh, 1987, p. 13, 20–21; Hefner, 1993, p. 17; Etherington, 1996, p. 216; Luig, 1997, p. 11, McKittrick, 2002, p. 8, 104, 107.)

crocosm, 2) The Intellectualist Theory, 3) A Historical Explanation, and 4) A Socio-Structural Explanation.[5] The Shattered Microcosm is actually a kind of preliminary version of The Intellectualist Theory, and the other three are not entirely comparable, because they lay emphasis on different aspects of conversion. The Historical Explanation deals more with the process of conversion, while the Intellectualist Theory and particularly the Socio-Structural Explanation concentrate on its causes[6] . I will try in the following pages to provide a short review of the three main theories of conversion.

The Intellectualist Theory was formulated in the early 1970s by Robin Horton, whose basic argument was that the activities of the missionaries were not as important a factor in the conversion of Africans to Christianity as is usually believed. Instead, he saw conversion as a natural final stage in a process in which Africans adjusted their cosmology to meet the requirements of the modern world.

According to Horton, the typical traditional African cosmology is characterized by a two-tiered arrangement of unobservable spiritual beings. In the first tier are the lesser spirits which are concerned with the affairs of the local community and its environments, i.e. the microcosm, while in the second tier is the Supreme Being, concerned with the whole world, the macrocosm. As long as the Africans had little or no contact with the outside world, their religious beliefs and practices centred around the lesser spirits, the actions of which were an adequate explanation for everything that took place within the microcosm of the local community. Ideas about the Supreme Being were vaguer, and few events were actually attributed to him. He was a *deus otiosus* who did not have much to do with mortals.

When the microcosm began to break down with the emergence of modern features such as better communications, trade and colonial administration, and when people became involved with a wider world, the traditional cosmology was no longer a sufficient explanation. Faced with this interpretative challenge, the adherents of the traditional religion did not abandon their cosmology, but remoulded it until it attained its pristine level of explanatory coverage. Because the boundaries of the microcosm were weakening, it was assumed that the lesser spirits were in retreat and their importance for people was diminishing. At the same time the role of the Supreme Being, the ruler of the universe, became more important than ever. Therefore more elaborate theories to describe him and new ritual techniques for approaching him were created.

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5 Ikenga- Metuh, 1987, s. 12-19.

6 It is worth mentioning that the Intellectualist Theory and Socio-Structural Explanation were obviously the basis on which Felix Ekechi constructed his categorization of the two basic historiographical traditions in the study of conversion in Africa. The first one he calls the historical or “materialist” school, while the second one is the theoretical or “intellectualist” school. According to Ekechi, the proponents of the historical school tend to explain the Africans’ drift into the missionary orbit in terms of a desire for the material or social opportunities which interaction with the missionaries could offer. The proponents of the theoretical school, on the other hand, usually explain conversion with concepts such as religious or cultural alienation. As the latter part of this chapter will demonstrate, the historical school would probably use a Socio-Structural Explanation of conversion while the proponents of the theoretical school would probably favour explanations based on the Intellectualist Theory. (See Ekechi, 1993, p. 154–155.)

Even this adjusted traditional cosmology could no longer give people a sufficient explanation of the world as more and more of them became involved in life outside the confines of their microcosm, and they therefore began converting to Christianity or Islam, which, as world religions, could offer them a comprehensible explanation of the world. Thus, the acceptance of Christianity or Islam was due at least as much to development of the traditional cosmology in response to the emergence of the "modern" situation as to the activities of the missionaries. Conversion, then, was just the last stage in a development which was "in the air" anyway.[7]

It is very difficult to prove Horton's theory to be either false or true, because his "thought-experiment" is based on a situation that never really existed in Africa. He describes a situation in which the Africans were faced with all the features of the modern situation which they faced in reality but in the absence of actively working Islamic and Christian proselytizers.[8] Therefore, while he belittles the role of the active missionaries in the conversion process, he at the same time assumes that knowledge about the Christian faith or Islam was available to the Africans so that they could adopt either of these religions when their process of cosmological development had reached the right stage.

As Horton's theory was basically a "thought-experiment", it provoked many critical reactions[9] . He has been criticized for the following errors, among others:

1) He belittles the role of missionaries in the alleged monolatrous development of the traditional cosmology and in conversion to world religions.[10]
2) By emphasising the intellectual factor in conversion, he at the same time ignores such things as social and political changes as causes of conversion, and therefore the Intellectualist Theory becomes a single-cause explanation.[11]
3) Pre-modern African communities were not as isolated, and traditional African cosmologies as uniform, as Horton claims.[12]
4) Empirical evidence shows that many African societies were incorporated into the wider world without accompanying monolatrous development of their traditional cosmology.[13]
5) The Intellectualist Theory overestimates the survival of original African elements of religion and underestimates the willingness and ability of Africans to make Islam or Christianity their own religion.[14]
6) Horton's approach overlooks the possibility that the world religions may have introduced completely new concepts into the African religious repertory.[15]

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7 Horton, 1971, p. 101–104.

8 Horton, 1971, p. 102.

9 For Horton's answer to Humphrey Fisher's criticism and his minor alterations to the Intellectual Theory, see Horton, 1975, p. 219–234.

10 Fisher, 1973, p. 29; Ifeka-Moller, 1974, p. 58; Fisher, 1985, p. 153, 158; Ikenga-Metuh, 1987, p. 15; Hefner, 1993, p. 22.

11 Ifeka-Moller, 1974, p. 59; Fisher, 1985, p. 154–155; Hefner, 1993, p. 22.

12 Fisher, 1973, p. 29; Ifeka-Moller, 1974, p. 60; Fisher, 1985, p. 154; Hefner, 1993, p. 21.

13 Fisher, 1973, p. 29; Ifeka-Moller, 1974, p. 59; Hefner, 1993, p. 23.

14 Fisher, 1973, p. 27.

15 Gray, 1978, p. 96; Gray, 1990, p. 66–69.

Even though Horton's theory obviously lacks historical specificity, and is probably unprovable, it would still be unjust to label it as totally untenable. To my mind, his approach has at least two merits. Firstly, he clearly emphasizes the ability of Africans to reshape their own ritual and intellectual world, instead of being mere passive recipients of western ideas. Secondly, his approach reminds us that conversion is usually a long-lasting process which starts well before the actual change of religious affiliation, and which usually continues after that, at least on the mental level. It should also be noted that some case-studies have revealed empirical evidence which would give support to Horton's theory, but even these scholars do not consider the Intellectualist Theory alone to be the best, or even a sufficient explanation for conversion to Christianity.[16]

The Historical Explanation was created by Humphrey Fisher, Horton's most devoted critic, as an alternative to Horton's theory. The reason for this lay in his opinion that Horton's evidence was chiefly drawn from Christian experience, and therefore he wanted to look more closely at conversion to Islam in order to see what light it could throw on Horton's arguments.[17]

One main difference between the theories of Horton and Fisher is that while Horton emphasises the internal religious dynamics of the African community as a reason for conversion, Fisher seems to assign a larger role to external religious influences. According to Fisher, conversion to Islam in many African societies was characterized by three stages: quarantine, mixing and reform. During the quarantine stage the new faith was represented by newcomers, such as traders, refugees and Islamic clerics employed by the pagan rulers. Islamic orthodoxy is relatively secure, because there are no converts and therefore no one to bring heterodox beliefs from non-Muslim religions into the Muslim community. In most places quarantine is not maintained indefinitely. Sooner or later the local people begin to convert to Islam in increasing numbers and the stage of mixing emerges, during which converts combine professions of Islam with elements of their earlier religion while orthodox Islam is kept alive either by written texts or by a few individuals. Finally, after a lapse of decades or even centuries, a wave of reform sweeps away the mixing, and the religion is reformed to orthodox Islam. The reform stage is not necessarily final, however, for as reform is often burdensome to maintain, there is a possibility of the religious situation sliding back to the mixing stage.[18] The mass conversions of the mixing stage obviously belong to Fisher's category of first conversion, while reform witnesses conversions of his second type.

Even though the Historical Explanation is based on empirical evidence drawn from Muslim communities, it can well be a convincing theory for explaining the process of conversion to Christianity. Thus a quarantine stage can be suggested, at which the African communities had missionaries but few or no converts. Christian orthodoxy would not have been in jeopardy, because the few converts could be

16 Peel, 1977, p. 124–127, 134; Simensen, 1987, p. 86; Carmody, 1988, p. 194–195.

17 Fisher, 1973, p. 27.

18 Fisher, 1973, p. 31.

thoroughly indoctrinated into the Christian faith and their behaviour could be closely controlled. The mixing stage could be said to have begun with the mass conversions, the religion of the converts having very probably been a syncretistic combination of the Christian faith and traditional religion[19] . The reform stage in the Christian context might be represented by various, often short-lived, revival movements, such as the Ovamboland revival of the early 1950s, which was orthodox at least in the sense that its adherents emphasised a lifestyle which was claimed to be in accordance with God's word[20] .

The undisputable merit of the Historical Explanation is the fact that it highlights conversion as a continuous process[21] . What it lacks, however, is a satisfactory explanation for why Africans converted to world religions, particularly during the mixing stage. In this respect Fisher seems to be content with a rather vague proposition that the outward appearance of Islam, with formal prayers, distinctive dress, fasting etc., might have attracted potential converts. As another potential explanation, he mentions the practical help which Africans often received from Muslim clerics (or missionaries in the case of Christianity).[22]

The Socio-Structural Explanation deals with the causes of conversion more than either the Intellectualist Theory or the Historical Explanation. Unlike the other two, it is not actually a uniform theory created by one person, but rather an upper category of explanations which all stress the importance of social or practical causes in religious change. Since Caroline Ifeka-Moller's article on socio-structural factors in conversion to Christianity in Eastern Nigeria is, in a way, a classic of the Socio-Structural school, it is best to start the introduction to this theory with her ideas.

According to Ifeka-Moller, cosmology is embedded in social order, and therefore changes in social order are reflected in the religious sphere. This means that the causes of conversion are to be found in changes in social order. In the case of Eastern Nigeria, Ifeka-Moller sees mass conversions as a consequence of two changes: the incorporation of that area into the new world economy and the imposition of new political roles under the colonial system. In this situation the Africans soon realized that these changes did not actually bring them the rewards promised by the whites at their acceptance of the new rule. Therefore, they began to regard Christianity as a promise of a new kind of power which they could use to

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19 It would naturally be rather questionable to state that the religion of mass converts is always a mixture of Christianity and traditional religion, but there are some factors that would support the idea that it usually was. Firstly, it is difficult to imagine that all people who begin to convert en masse, or even the majority, have a profound conviction that the Christian faith is the only true one and should exclude all other systems of belief. Secondly, the religious indoctrination of converts can hardly be as profound as before when the number of people wishing to adopt Christianity increases rapidly. It is therefore quite possible that the adoption of Christian doctrines may remain far from perfect and the ideas and practices of the old religion may be followed alongside those of the new one.

20 E.g. Löytty, 1969, p. 361–368. The Ovambo revival will be discussed in detail later.

21 Ikenga-Metuh, 1987, p. 17.

22 Fisher, 1985, p. 157.

discover the secrets of the white man's technological superiority.[23] Thus, Ifeka-Moller sees the emergence of colonial rule and its negative economic influence in African communities as general conditions for conversion.[24]

Socio-structuralists sometimes regard the emergence of colonial rule as a direct cause of conversion. F. Ekechi, for example, is of the opinion that the most important reason why the Igbo converted to Christianity, though not the only one, was their belief that the colonial administration would not send punitive expeditions against Christians or introduce a forced labour system amongst them.[25] The colonial conquest has also been used as an explanation for conversion to Christianity in the case of the Ijebu of Eastern Nigeria. It has been said that they were impressed by the iron hand of the Christian British conquerors, and therefore decided to acquire something of that power by adopting their new masters' religion.[26]

The emergence of colonial rule as a direct and generally valid explanation for conversion has been questioned by John Peel, for example, who thinks that the desire to acquiring power by adopting a world religion is rarely a sufficient condition for explaining conversion, although it is often a necessary one. An equally necessary condition is that the traditional ethnic cosmologies make conversion for the sake of power possible. He also points out that military conquests by Europeans in Africa do not usually seem to be associated with rapid or intense conversions.[27]

Socio-structural interpretations do not normally seem to consider colonialism to be a direct cause of conversion, but emphasise its indirect effect. Colonialism changed African societies and created favourable conditions for conversion. This indirect effect can be seen in the field of formal education, for example, since the colonial administration and economy generated a situation where Africans began to take an interest in western education in order to find jobs in the administration or in the economic sector. Since such an education was usually provided by missionaries, the Africans came under their influence and were possibly converted in due course.[28] Some scholars even tend to see conversion as a kind of transaction. The missionaries had something which the Africans needed or wanted in the new colonial environment, education etc., and in order to get what they wanted, they gave the missionaries what they wanted, i.e. their conversion.[29]

The socio-structural way of explaining conversion is not always tied to a colonial situation, however, as exemplified by Birgitta Larsson's interpretation of the conversion of Haya women, many of whom, she claims, had first come in touch with missionaries when they sought asylum at mission stations. The main reason

23 Ifeka-Moller, 1974, p. 61.
24 Ibid. p. 65–66.
25 Ekechi, 1971, p. 103–107.
26 Peel, 1977, p. 112 and note 8.
27 Peel, 1977, p. 112, 127.
28 Ekechi, 1971, p. 107; Peel, 1977, p. 131; Beidelman, 1982, p. 59, 69, 96; Carmody, 1988, particularly p. 198–199; Kirby, 1994, p. 63.
29 Ekechi and Simensen at least refer to the possibility that conversion may have been part of such a transaction between the missionaries and the Africans (see Ekechi, 1971, p. 111 and Simensen, 1987, p. 86–87).

for their flight was their wish to obtain greater personal freedom of action than was possible in the male-dominated Haya communities.[30] Thus Larsson explains conversion in terms of the social structures of an African community and the alternative which the Christian faith could offer to socially oppressed groups.

Similar "conversion to greater freedom" explanations can also be found in recent studies by Ulrich Luig and Meredith McKittrick. According to Luig, young Tongan men were attracted by mission Christianity because they saw it as a means of escaping from the restrictions of their own society, and of pursuing a career in the "modern" sector.[31] Similarly, McKittrick sees the conversion of young people, who made up the majority of early converts in Ovamboland, to have been caused by their desire for a higher status, claiming that the young Ovambos recognised that identification with the missionaries offered new ideas and systems of authority that might hold a stronger promise of increased status and economic power, from which young people were usually barred in the traditional Ovambo social system. The security which missionaries were assumed to be able to provide in violent times also draw young people to them.[32]

As the above examples show, the Socio-Structural Explanation, like the Intellectualist Theory, considers a change of some kind, or a desire for change, to be a precondition for conversion in general. But the change that occurs in connection with conversion itself is somewhat different. The Intellectualist Theory regards changes at the social level as impetuses for mental changes, which then lead to conversion, while the Socio-Structural Explanation views changes in this base level as more direct causes of conversion. One point that is worth noting in the Socio-Structural Explanation is its tendency to view Africans' religious thinking as a kind of practical problem-solving mechanism. The obvious danger, if this view is taken to extremes, is that conversion is explained purely in material or even materialistic terms.

Having said this much about theories, I can conclude by saying that probably none of them can be considered to be universally valid. It is hard to believe that there could be one great theory of conversion, because the circumstances in which conversions have taken place have varied greatly from time to time and from place to place. Therefore, anybody who sticks strictly to only one theoretical framework when analysing conversion is bound to neglect many aspects of the process. Both socio-structural and ideational factors involved in the process should be taken into consideration, but such a demand means that a properly executed historical analysis of conversion may be nothing but a chimera, because the sources can severely limit the possibilities for analysis. In my view, written historical sources in particular give much more information about the potential socio-structural factors affect-

30 Larsson, 1991, passim. but note p. 85–87, 210 and 216. Larsson proves that the desire to obtain greater freedom was the reason that brought the women in touch with the missionaries, but she cannot satisfactorily prove whether this was also the reason for their conversion.

31 Luig, 1997, p. 126–127.

32 McKittrick, 1995, p. 11, 117–120, 130–131; McKittrick, 1998, p. 244–250; McKittrick, 2002, p. 108–112.

ing conversion than about ideational factors. The latter could possibly be found by using oral evidence, but much of this has been lost because most of the people involved in the mass conversions have already passed away. It therefore seems that the ideational causes of mass conversion, even when they exist, tend to remain more or less inaccessible to historical scrutiny.

Conversion to Christianity (the phenomenon)

When trying to figure out what kind of phenomenon conversion in Ovamboland was, it is best to start by studying the number of converts. The numbers of people who were baptised to Lutheran Christianity after teaching between the years 1910 and 1966 are shown in Appendix 1. The figures given are not precise if a convert is defined as somebody who has changed religious affiliation of his or her own free will, as some of those marked as converts in the Mission Society statistics were in fact female converts' children who were baptised together with their mothers. Unfortunately it is quite impossible to say for sure how many of the people covered by the statistics in Appendix 1 actually were children and not converts in the proper sense of the word, but judging from the information given in the available parish records I would estimate that the figure is some 15 per cent. The proportion would have varied from year to year and from parish to parish, of course, and therefore the changes in numbers of converts' children obviously do not explain the changes in the total numbers of Ovambo converts. Thus the figures in Appendix 1 indicate quite well the trends in Ovambos' conversion even though the numbers may not be exact.

As the figures show, conversion to Christianity in Ovamboland was not an evenly advancing process but had its ups and downs. The first obvious boom was experienced between the years 1920 and 1922, when the numbers of baptised adults were approximately ten times higher than in the previous years. The lowest point of the subsequent decline in conversions was reached in 1929 to 1931, probably caused by the severe famine prevalent in Ovamboland at that time.[33] People simply had to focus their attention on keeping alive and everything else, including going to school or becoming a Christian, was of secondary importance. The famine of 1915 also seems to have caused a transitory decline in adult baptisms.

The second wave of conversions took place between 1948 and 1954, the actual numbers being higher than during the early 1920s although the wave was less marked in relative terms because the numbers differed less from those of the preceding or following years than in the early 1920s. The third increase in conversion figures took place in the early 1960s and continued at least up to 1966.

If we take a look at the geographical aspect of conversion, we notice that the conversion wave of the early 1920s was caused almost exclusively by conversions in

33 On this famine, see e.g. NCO Annual Report 1929, p. 4, 11/1, NAO, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1930, p. 30–33, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Hayes, 1992, p. 309–317.

Ondonga and Uukwanyama. The numbers of adult baptisms did also increase to some extent in the western communities (Ongandjera, Uukwaluudhi, Ombalantu and Uukolonkadhi), but the highest peak there was reached a little later (1924). In Uukwambi there was a moderate increase in conversions in 1921 and 1922. Ndonga and Kwanyama conversions also made up most of the increase in figures during the second wave, and although conversions increased in the western areas, too, the rise was proportionately smaller than in the east.

It is obvious that Christianity first gained a footing in the east, particularly in Ondonga[34] , and Ndonga converts always made up more than half of the total until 1921, and between 40 and 50 per cent up to World War II, even though the proportion of Ndonga in the Ovambo population was around 30 per cent[35] . Thus the eastern communities (Ondonga and Uukwanyma) produced a larger proportion of converts throughout the period up to World War II than could be expected from their proportion of the Ovambo population. According to the 1933 census, for example, the Ndonga and Kwanyma made up just under 70 per cent of the Ovamboland population, but up to 1938 they usually accounted for 70 to 90 percent of the converts. From the beginning of the war until the beginning of the second wave of conversions there was a fairly good balance between the eastern and western communities in their proportions of the converts and the total population, but during this second wave eastern converts again temporarily predominated. From the early 1960s onwards, however, western communities became the main area of christianization, so that while they made up around 35 per cent of the Ovamboland population according to the 1960 census, they had 40 to 50 per cent of all the Ovambo converts from 1961 onwards.

The earlier establishment of Christianity in Ondonga is also reflected in Table1 below, which shows Lutheran Christians as a proportion of the total population of each Ovambo community in census years.[36]

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34 There were regional variations inside Ondonga, too. In the mid-1950s Lutheran Christianity had such a strong footing in Western Ondonga, which had been the main field of missionary activities from the 1870s onwards, that Lutheranism was described there as the "national church". At the same time, in Northeastern Ondonga Christians were estimated to have made up only just over ten per cent of the population. (See E.J. Pentti to O. Vuorela 8 Aug. 1955 Eac46 and s.d. August 1956 Eac47, AFMS, NAF.)

35 Sources of Ovamboland censuses as in Table 1.

36 The figures in Table 1 should be considered indicative only, because the reliability of colonial censuses may be questionable. I do not even know what methods were used in the 1933, 1951 and 1960 censuses, but in 1926, when a census was organized in some parts of Ovamboland, the method was unreliable. Officials counted the homesteads and multiplied the figure by the estimated average number of inhabitants per homestead. On the other hand, the missionary statistics regarding the numbers of Christians are not entirely without their problems. When Birger Eriksson checked the statistics in 1957, he came to the conclusion that the missionaries' annual statistics sent to the Society's headquarters in Helsinki somewhat exaggerated the numbers of Christians. Unfortunately, he does not say how much exaggeration his assessment revealed. All in all, the figures for Lutheran Christians as a proportion of the total population as given in Table 1 can be considered to represent the maximum potential proportions, as the figure in reality were probably slightly smaller. (On the method used in the 1926 census, see NCO Annual Report 1926, p. 6, 11/1, NAO, NAN. On the reliability of the missionary statistics, see B. Eriksson to O. Vuorela 25 Feb. 1957, Eac47, AFMS, NAF.)

Table 1. Lutheran Christians as a proportion of the total population in Ovambo communities (percentages).

	Ondonga	Uukwanyama	Uukwambi	Ongandjera	Uukwaluudhi	Ombalantu	Uukolonkadhi	Ovamboland
1933	39.7	26.0	14.1	13.8	12.0	12.1	10.2	26.1
1951	50.5	29.3	32.8	29.8	23.8	15.1	12.3	33.8
1960	69.1	51.1	49.6	44.5	51.4	26.0	30.0	53.1

Sources: Numbers of Christians in Lutheran parishes: Tilastotaulut Suomen Lähetysseuran työstä lähetysalueellaan Ambomaalla [Statistical tables concerning the work of the Finnish Mission Society in Ovamboland] 1933, 1950, 1951 and 1960. Appendices in the minutes of the missionaries' meetings, Hha, Archives of the Finnish Mission Society, National Archives of Finland.
Population of Ovamboland: Native Commissioner Ovamboland to the Secretary for SWA 15 February 1934, Annexure Ovamboland Census 1933, 11/1, Native Administration Ovamboland, National Archives of Namibia; Annual Report on Native Affairs, Ovamboland 1951, Annexure A, 12/2, Native Administration Ovamboland, National Archives of Namibia; Report of the Commission of Enquiry into South West Africa Affairs 1962–1963, R.P. 12/1964, table XIII, p. 35.
Note: As no figures are available for parish members in Ombalantu and Uukolonkadhi in 1951, the figures for 1950 have been used instead.

Meredith McKittrick has suggested that about half of the Ovamboland population had converted to Christianity either by the Second World War[37] or by the 1950s[38]. At least the first suggestion exaggerates the number. Although I unfortunately do not have annual figures for the numbers of Roman Catholic and Anglican Christians, some figures for 1951 are available[39]. When we add these figures to the number of Lutheran Christians, we find out that there were around 71,000 Christians in 1951 out of a total population of some 198,000, i.e. about 36 per cent. With the second conversion wave in the 1950s the number of Christians increased rapidly, but they still probably made up a little under half of the total population in the mid-1950s[40], and their number presumably exceeded that of non-Christians for the first time in the late 1950s.

The age-structure of the people who converted to Lutheran Christianity can be studied using the registers of baptisms that are part of the population records kept

37 McKittrick, 1998, p. 258.
38 McKittrick, 1995, p. 10. See also p. 143.
39 According to information given by the missions to the Native Commissioner, there were 3,586 Catholic Ovambo and 653 Anglicans in 1951 (see NCO Annual Report 1951, Annexure D, 12/2, NAO, NAN).
40 Comparing the census information of 1951 with the numbers of Christians as given in the missionaries' annual statistics for 1954, Elias J. Pentti estimated in 1955 that the number of Roman Catholic and Anglican Christians at that time was something like 15,000. Thus, according to his calculations, Christians would have made up 50 per cent of the Ovamboland population in 1954. Pentti probably exaggerated the number of Catholics and Anglicans, however, because it is reported elsewhere there were some 8,000 Catholic Ovambo and some 1,000 Anglicans in 1953. Thus Christians probably still made just under half of the population in the mid-1950s. (See E.J. Pentti to O. Vuorela 8 Aug. 1955, Eac46, AFMS, NAF; Notkola & Siiskonen, 2000, Table 4.2, p. 29.)

in Lutheran parishes. Information concerning the age of converts is usually available from the 1930s onwards, however, as before that pastors seldom recorded any, even estimated, year of birth for a convert.

A count of people who were baptised in seven main Lutheran parishes[41] on the "adult baptismal days", divided into fourteen age groups (0 to 9, 10 to14, 15 to 19, 20 to 24, 25 to 29, 30 to 34, 35 to 39, 40 to 44, 45 to 49, 50 to 54, 55 to 59, 60 to 64, 65 to 69 and over 70 years of age) suggests that, if the information thus received can be assumed as generally valid for whole of Ovamboland, as it most likely can, the majority of Ovambo converts were fairly young. The largest single age-group in all parishes is that between 15 and 19 years of age, and the second largest 20 to 24 years. Children between 10 and 14 years usually make up the third largest group, despite the fact that children baptised together with their converting mothers were excluded from the count here. The predominance of the younger generation is illustrated in the following table, which shows the three largest age-groups as a proportion of all converts.

Table 2. The age group 10 to 24 years as a proportion of all converts in seven Lutheran Ovambo parishes (percentages).

	Oshi-gambo	Olu-konda	Eenhana	Elim	Okahao	Tsandi	Naka-yale
1925–29	..	..	–	..	48.0	..	61.2
1930–34	..	..	–	83.1	79.1	..	57.3
1935–39	61.4	..	..	77.7	..	75.1	71.3
1940–44	80.9	58.7	74.0	80.8	87.8	85.0	88.6
1945–49	58.0	55.0	59.9	48.4	79.1	78.2	87.5
1950–54	50.3	59.3	54.1	53.4	68.3	73.8	53.2
1955–59	73.6	89.6	56.3	71.7	84.6	74.5	57.5
1960–64	82.6	76.9	..	75.1	88.1	79.0	59.7

Sources: Parish baptismal registers.

One reason why the young generation is so predominant among the converts may be their proportion in the population as a whole. Even though colonial censuses do not give exact information about the age-structure of the population, they give some hints that the population was relatively young. According to the 1933 census, for instance, children under 18 years of age made up 54.2 per cent of the total population, and the figure was still 42.5 per cent in the 1951 census.[42]

The proportion of young age groups among the converts is nevertheless so substantial that they probably made up a far larger proportion of the converts than of the total population. Unfortunately, the colonial censuses are so inadequate that it

41 Oshigambo, Olukonda, Eenhana, Elim, Okahao, Tsandi and Nakayale.

42 NCO Annual Report 1936, p. 5, 9, 11/1, NAO, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1951, Annexure A, 12/2, NAO, NAN.

is impossible to make a thorough analysis of which age groups may have been over or under-represented among the converts, although it is possible to make some estimates concerning the age groups 10 to 14 and 15 to 19 years by comparing the data collected from parish records with an estimate of the size of the age group 10 to 18 years in the total population based on information from the 1933 and 1951 censusses.[43] In the following analysis the figures taken from the 1933 census are compared with those from parish records extending up to 1944[44], and the 1951 census information with the figures for 1945 to 1954.

The estimated sizes of the age group 10 to 18 in the various communities as a proportion of the total population according to the 1933 census information are following: Ondonga 33.8%, Uukwanyama 36.0%, Uukwambi 42.9%, Ongandjera 42.6%, Uukwaluudhi 40.8% and Ombalantu 42.9%.[45] It was only in Okahao (Ongandjera) and Nakayale (Ombalantu) during the period 1925–1929 that the proportion of the age group 10 to 19 among the converts was smaller than their estimated proportion in the total population (29.6% in Okahao and 31.6% in Nakayale). Otherwise adolescents made up between 49.7% (Nakayale 1940–1944) and 70.4% (Elim in Uukwambi 1935–1939) of the total number of converts, figure that is mostly about ten percentage points higher than their proportion of the total population.

The following estimates of the proportion of teenagers in the total population were obtained from the 1951 census: Ondonga 26.7%, Uukwanyama 26.2%, Uukwambi 28.0%, Ongandjera 29.4%, Uukwaluudhi 28.9% and Ombalantu 28.0%.[46] Here it was only in Elim (Uukwambi) between 1945 and 1949 that the proportion of adolescents among the converts (28.1%) was about the same as their proportion in total population. Otherwise they made up between 31.9% (Nakayale 1950–1954) and 52.8% (Tsandi 1950–1954) of the total number of converts, again mostly some ten percentage points higher than their proportion of the total population.

There are no census figures available for the years 1955–1964 which would enable similar comparisons to be made, but that does not actually matter, as the numbers of converts are themselves indicative enough. During this time the proportion of teenagers among the converts varied from 43.0% (Nakayale 1955–1959)

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43 When estimating the size of the age group 10 to 18 years in the total population of Ovamboland, I have simply divided the number of children given in censuses into two equal groups, representing the ages 0 to 9 years and 10 to 18 years. This method obviously overestimates the size of the latter age group, as the age structure of Ovamboland evidently followed a pyramid model with a large base. It was nevertheless better in this case to overestimate the size of the 10 to 18 age group than to underestimate it, because its underestimation would have made the group of converts aged 10 to 19 year appear too large. It should also be noted that the comparison is actually between the proportion of adolescents among the converts and the proportion of adolescents among the total population over ten years of age. Those aged 0 to 9 years were excluded from the population figures because there were practically no converts under ten years of age.

44 Since the first date at which there is reliable information concerning the age structure of converts varies from parish to parish, the time span of the comparison between the proportion of adolescent converts and that of adolescents in the population also varies. The first year of the comparison period for each parish is shown in Table 2 (e.g. 1925 for Nakayale and 1940 for Olukonda).

45 Estimates based on figures in NCO Annual Report 1936, p. 5–6, 11/1, NAO, NAN.

46 Estimates based on figures in NCO Annual Report 1951, Annexure A, 12/2, NAO, NAN.

to 87.0% (Olukonda 1955–1959), the average proportion over the seven parishes being around 60 per cent. This must be higher than their proportion in the total population.

In spite of the fact that the above analysis is partly based on estimation, the figures are so clear that the conclusion is obvious: young Ovambo converted to Christianity more eagerly than did their older compatriots, at least from the 1930s onwards. Indeed, the pattern seems to have been similar before the 1930s as well, but there are no quantitative data to prove it. It is noticeable, however, that when the missionaries reported increased interest in Christianity in one parish or another, they often wrote that it was the young people, even children, who were most interested in the new faith.[47] When older generation sometimes showed an interest, as happened in some parts of Ondonga in 1913, the event was reported with extra delight, because, as the missionaries put it, the older people had so far stood aloof from Christianity and had been more deeply rooted in their paganism.[48] The predominance of the young generation among the converts during the first two decades of colonial rule is also noted by Meredith McKittrick, who seems to base her argument in this matter at least partly on oral information.[49]

Although the intention is to analyse the causes of conversion later in chapter four, one wild idea may be put forward here. One thing that may go part of the way towards explaining the predominance of young people among the converts was their imperfect enculturation to the original Ovambo system of beliefs. Because of their age, they had not yet learned to consider this the only possible system of beliefs to the same extent as the older generation probably had, and it was easier for them to question its validity and, if necessary, adopt the alternative world view offered by the missionaries.

The analysis of the age structure of the converts does not reveal any clear trends with time, but we can observe from Table 2 that in four of the seven parishes the proportion of young converts was at its lowest during the period 1950–1954 and in two during the period 1945–1949. This temporary decrease might give some support to McKittrick's argument that the church members must have begun to include more older people some time between the mid-1930s and mid-1950s.[50] If we now take a look at the proportion of the age group over 50 years among the converts, we find a fairly clear trend in the parishes of Okahao and Nakayale.[51]

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47 See e.g. N. Väänänen to M. Tarkkanen 18 Dec. 1917, Eac20; R. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 29 April 1918, Eac21; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 11 Sept. 1919, Eac21; E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 16 Aug. 1926. Eac26; K. Petäjä's Annual Report (Rehoboth) 1912, mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendix 23, Hha6; O. Tylväs' Annual Report (Elim) 1926, mmm 13–14 Jan 1927, Appendix 21, Hha9; A. Hänninen's Annual Report (Engela) 1934, mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 42, Hha13. All in AFMS, NAF.

48 M. Rautanen to H. Haahti 6 Dec. 1913, Eac2; K. Björklund's Annual Report (Olukonda) 1913 & J. Wehanen's Annual Report (Ontananga) 1913, mmm 15 Jan. 1914, Appendices 3 and 8, Hha7. All in AFMS, NAF.

49 McKittrick, 1995, p. 117–119.

50 McKittrick, 1995, p. 178 including note 110.

51 Interestingly enough, Nakayale (the only Lutheran parish of Ombalantu up to 1966) and Okahao (the only Lutheran parish of Ongandjera up to 1954) are parishes that cover the area dealt with in McKittrick's dissertation. They are also the two parishes for which fairly reliable data concerning the ages of converts are available from as early as the mid-1920s.

This group made up 13.1% of the converts in Okahao during the period 1925–1929, after which their proportion dropped to something like five per cent up to 1950. In 1950–1954 they again made up 11.6%, but after that their proportion decreased to five per cent once more. Rather similarly, the older generation made up 14.8% of the converts in Nakayale in 1930–1934 but after that there were virtually no older converts until 1950. In 1950–1954 they made up 12.4%, and the peak was reached in 1955–1959, when they accounted for 21.2% of all Nakayale converts.[52] There are no such clear trends in the other parishes but it can be noted that high peaks of conversion in this age group were achieved in Olukonda (24.0%) and Elim (20.7%) in 1945–1949, in Oshigambo (22.3%) in 1950–1954 and in Eenhana (26.4%) in 1955–1959. In Tsandi there seem to have been no notable changes in the proportion of older people among the converts.[53]

We can also try to approach the problem of possible changes in the age structure of converts by looking at their median ages. The results for our sample parishes are given in the following table.

Table 3. Median ages of converts in seven Ovamboland parishes (Men/Women/All)

	Oshi-gambo	Olu-konda	Eenhana	Elim	Okahao	Tsandi	Naka-yale
1925–29	..	..	–	..	25/27/26	..	21/22/22
1930–34	..	..	–	17/17/17	20/18/18	..	18.5/18/18
1935–39	20.5/18/19	..	..	17/17/17	..	18/19/19	19/20/19
1940–44	21/17/18	31/19/20	19/18/18	16/17/17	19/18/18	19/17/18.5	19/20/19
1945–49	23.5/20/21	24/21/22	21/22.5/22	29/23/25	23/20/ 21.5	20.5/20/20	21/20/20
1950–54	29/22/24	19/18/18	25/19/21	23/23/23	22/21/21	19/19/19	23/24/24
1955–59	16/17/17	16/15/16	16.5/18/18	20.5/18/19	20/18/19	18/19/19	17/23/22
1960–64	17/18/17	17/15/16	..	18/17/17	19/18/18	17/17/17	18/23/21

Source: Parish baptismal registers.

The figures again point to the same basic phenomenon, that the majority of the converts were young, usually in their late teens or early twenties. They also show that the second conversion wave brought in older converts, particularly in Oshigambo, Elim and Nakayale. Therefore, after combining the data on age groups and median ages, it could be said that, on the whole, there are indications that the proportion of older people among the converts slightly increased during the second conversion wave in the late1940s and early 1950s. This conclusion should be treated with caution, however, because reliable data on the ages of converts exist in most parishes only from the 1930s, and therefore the time span of the analysis is relatively short.

It is also evident from Table 3 that, with few exceptions, there were no marked differences between the ages of men and women at conversion, the men being in general a little older, except in the parish of Nakayale in Ombalantu. The comparison between men and women is not totally reliable, however, because it is only

52 Okahao and Nakayale registers of baptism.

53 Eenhana, Elim, Olukonda, Oshigambo and Tsandi registers of baptism.

based on baptisms in Ovamboland and therefore excludes the hundreds of men who converted while at work elsewhere. Since it would take months to collect the necessary data from parish records in order to analyse the age structure or median age of all the migrant labourers who converted, I have focused on a small sample of these, which includes the men who converted in the Police Zone and became members of the parishes of Oshigambo, Elim, Okahao, Tsandi or Nakayale after returning to the north in 1931, 1941, 1951 and 1961[54]. The sample consists of 293 men whose age at baptism is known, giving a median age of 24 years.[55] Since this is higher than the figure for the men baptised in Ovamboland, as shown in Table 3, it is likely that the difference in age at conversion between the men and women was somewhat larger than the table above would indicate, i.e. the men did indeed convert to Christianity at a slightly higher age in general, than the women.

The proportions of men and women among the converts cannot be presented in a single table, because of a technical change in the annual statistics in 1950. The total period considered here is therefore covered by two tables, the first of which shows the sex ratio of Ovamboland converts up to 1949 and the second for six[56] sample parishes in 1935–1964.

Table 4. Sex ratio of converts to Lutheran Christianity baptised in Ovamboland 1910–1949.*

	Women %	Men %	Total number of adult baptisms
1910–14	52.6	47.4	721
1915–19	50.3	49.7	1,069
1920–24	59.1	40.9	5,733
1925–29**	65.7	34.3	3,360
1930–34	66.0	34.0	3,175
1935–39	66.7	33.3	4,062
1940–44	60.5	39.5	4,932
1945–49	66.1	33.9	6,526

Source: Tilastotaulut Suomen Lähetysseuran työstä lähetysalueellaan Ambomaalla 1910–1949.[Statistical tables concerning the work of the Finnish Mission Society in Ovamboland] Appendices in the minutes of the missionaries' meetings, Hha, Archives of the Finnish Mission Society, National Archives of Finland.
Notes:
* With the exception of 1910–1914, the figures include children who were baptised together with their converting mothers.
** Figures of Elim parish for 1926 and 1928 are not included. (1926 figure is missing in the original statistics and for 1928 only the total number of converts without sex ratio is given.)

54 Olukonda and Eenhana were excluded, Olukonda because a considerable number of its immigration registers are missing, and Eenhana because there were no returning migrant workers who were converts in 1931, 1951 or 1961 and only a few in 1941.

55 Parish records of Oshigambo, Elim, Okahao, Tsandi and Nakayale, registers of immigration 1931, 1941, 1951 and 1961 and main books.

56 Olukonda is again excluded because of missing immigration registers. Information about immigrating converts is needed later in the analysis.

Table 5. Sex ratio of converts to Lutheran Christianity baptised in the parishes of Oshigambo, Eenhana, Elim, Okahao, Tsandi and Nakayale in 1935–1964.*

	Women %	Men %	Total number of adult baptisms
1935–39**	69.4	30.6	1,094
1940–44	57.1	42.9	1,936
1945–49	65.3	34.7	1,915
1950–54	71.2	28.8	3,226
1955–59	79.3	20.7	1,866
1960–64	74.9	25.1	3,141

Source: Parish baptismal registers.
Note:
* Figures do not include children baptised together with their converting mothers.
** Eenhana and Okahao are not included in the figures for 1935–1939.

These two tables clearly show two things: firstly, that women always made up the majority of the converts in Ovamboland, and secondly, that the nearer to the present we come, the larger their proportion among the total converts is. But this, naturally, is not the whole truth, because the figures do not include the hundreds of men who were baptised while temporarily outside Ovamboland as migrant labourers. The numbers of men who converted while employed as migrant workers, returned home and became members of the six sample parishes in Ovamboland are given in Appendix 2.[57] When these men are added to people who converted in the parishes of Ovamboland, the sex ratio of the converts is seen to be rather different from that in the tables above. The results are given in Tables 6 and 7. The differences in the figures for years 1935–1949 are caused by the fact that the first table includes children who were baptised together with their converting mothers, while the second does not.

57 A converted migrant labourer is defined as a single man who was registered as an immigrant coming from the south to one of the sample parishes. There may be a very few exceptions, but the vast majority of these men were non-Christians when they left for work either in the Police Zone or in the Union of South Africa, where they were then baptized, so that they returned to Ovamboland as Christians. After returning home most of them (though not all) presented a certificate of baptism issued by the officiating pastor in the south to the pastor of the Lutheran parish in their home area, who then registered them first in the register of immigrants and then also in the main book (register of parish members). Obviously the vast majority of the men registered in this way as immigrants from the south were returning migrant workers, because this was virtually the only legitimate reason for Ovambo men to go there. Christian men who went on contract work were not recorded in the migration registers, because their stay in the south was regarded only as temporary. Therefore practically all the men who were recorded as immigrants to a parish from the south were ones who had not been members of any parish when they left Ovamboland. ** As far as the timing of conversion is concerned, it is assumed here that it took place in the same year when they were recorded as immigrants in their home parishes in Ovamboland. This was necessarily not the case, but an enormously time-consuming effort would have been needed to find out the true year of conversion for all migrant converts by reference to the immigration registers and main books. I did check the exact year of conversion for the 293 returning labourers mentioned earlier, however, and it turned out that conversion had usually taken place in either the previous or the same year as registration as an immigrant to Ovamboland.

Table 6. Sex ratio of all converts in the parishes of Oshigambo, Eenhana, Elim, Okahao, Tsandi and Nakayale (i.e. converted in the parishes or returning from the south as converts) in 1910–1949

	Women %	Men %	Total number of adult baptisms
1910–14	43.3	56.7	60
1915–19	40.5	59.5	333
1920–24	32.9	67.1	1,548
1925–29	52.1	47.9	980
1930–34	53.6	46.4	1,031
1935–39	55.9	44.1	1,938
1940–44	49.7	50.3	2,553
1945–49	52.9	47.1	2,585

Sources: Tilastotaulut Suomen Lähetysseuran työstä lähetysalueellaan Ambomaalla [Statistical tables concerning the work of the Finnish Mission Society in Ovamboland]1910–1949. Appendices in the minutes of the missionaries' meetings, Hha, Archives of the Finnish Mission Society, National Archives of Finland; Registers of immigration of the parishes.
Note:
Total number of adult baptisms = adults baptised in the parishes after teaching, including children of converting women + men baptised outside Ovamboland who moved to the parishes concerned. Figures for Tsandi and Nakayale are included from 1920 onwards and Eenhana from 1937 onwards.

Table 7. Sex ratio of all converts in the parishes of Oshigambo, Eenhana, Elim, Okahao, Tsandi and Nakayale (i.e. converted in the parishes or returning from the south as converts) in 1935–1964.

	Women %	Men %	Total number of adult baptism
1935–39*	59.2	40.8	1,283
1940–44	49.5	50.5	2,236
1945–49	52.6	47.4	2,377
1950–54	55.1	44.9	4,174
1955–59	62.9	37.1	2,352
1960–64	63.1	36.9	3,732

Sources: Parish baptismal registers and registers of immigration.
Note:
Total number of adult baptisms = adults baptised in the parishes after teaching, excluding children of converting women + men baptised outside Ovamboland who moved to the parishes concerned.
* Figures for Eenhana and Okahao not included.

There were only a few cases of converted laborers who for some reason had not presented their baptism certificate to the pastor in Ovamboland until several years after their actual baptism. The general assumption concerning the year of conversion of returning migrant laborers is therefore reliable enough.

When converted migrant labourers are taken into account, the predominance of women among the converts reverts to a male predominance up to the mid-1920s, and when we further note that women seem to have been in the majority in the Ovambo population,[58] it can be assumed that they made up a smaller proportion of the converts than of the population for even longer than that. If one can generalize from the information on the sample parishes, and there seems to be no reason why not, the proportion of women among the converts in all Ovambo parishes would seem to have become equivalent to their proportion in the population some time in the 1940s, as by the 1950s they appear to have made up a larger proportion of the converts than could be expected from their proportion in the population.

The predominance of men among the converts in earlier days was so great that it created considerable problems for the missionaries. There were still so few Christian women in the parish of Elim in Uukwambi in the late 1920s, for example, that the missionaries had to allow some hundred Christian men to have non-Christian wives,[59] even though they were in principle very reluctant to allow such mixed marriages[60]. The situation was probably also rather similar in other western areas, where Christianity was still a new and not very widely accepted phenomenon. At least in Ombalantu, where the first Lutheran congregation was established in 1920, there was a similar problem as in Elim, as there were only six or seven young (unmarried) Christian women for some hundred young Christian men.[61] The situation seems to have been similar in the oldest mission field, Ondonga, in the sense that there were more young men than women among the Christians, but the disproportion between them was smaller.[62]

It is very probable that the trend in the sex structure of converts from predominantly male to a more equally balanced ratio was a general one for Ovamboland and did not apply only to our sample parishes. At least such a development would be quite natural in a male-dominated society, such as that of the Ovambo, i.e. that

58 According to the 1933 census women made up 59.1 per cent of the adult Ovambo population, while the corresponding figure in the 1951 census was 53.2 percent. The predominance of women in the 1933 census seems to be surprisingly high, and it is possible that the census was carried out in a way which ignored at least some of the men who were out of Ovamboland for work. On the other hand, this can hardly have had any great effect on the census calculations. The recruitment of men diminished drastically in 1931 on account of the economic depression, and the next year there was no labour recruitment at all. Thus the proportion of women in the 1933 census may be fairly close to the actual situation. At least it is not totally impossible, because the 1991 census showed that the proportion of women in the Ondangwa and Oshakati regions in the age group over twenty years of age was 60.9 per cent. (On population figures, see NCO Annual Report 1936, p. 5, 11/1, NAO, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1951, Annexure A, 12/2, NAO, NAN; Republic of Namibia, 1991 Population and Housing Census, Report A, vol II, 1993, table C01a, p. 438–439. On labor recruitment see NCO Annual Report 1932, p. 26, 11/1, NAO, NAN.)

59 O. Tylväs' Annual Report (Elim) 1928, mmm 21 Jan. 1929, unnumbered appendix. Hha10, AFMS, NAF.

60 Minutes of the synodal meeting 2–3 May 1929, §5, Hha10, AFMS, NAF; Minutes of the men's meeting 25–26 Oct 1933, §7, Nba4, AELCIN.

61 A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 18 Aug. 1923, Eac23, AFMS, NAF.

62 According to Lehto, the parish of Onayena had two or three young men of marriageable age for each unmarried Christian girl in 1920. (Minutes of the field administration board 26 July 1920 § 3, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.)

a new phenomenon would be adopted first by the sex that was socially dominant and enjoyed more freedom of action culturally. As it then became better known, and possible fears or social concerns connected with it eased off, the "weaker" sex was also able to become associated with it.

The importance of migrant labour converts for Ovambo conversion as a whole can be illustrated further with some figures. Men who converted while serving as migrant labourers are shown as a proportion of all converts in six Ovambo parishes in Table 8.

Table 8. Migrant labourers as a proportion of all converts in the parishes of Oshigambo, Eenhana, Elim, Okahao, Tsandi and Nakayale in 1910–1964 (percentages).

	Oshi-gambo	Eenhana	Elim	Okahao	Tsandi	Naka-yale	All six together
1910–14	0.0	–	5.0	5.4	..	–	5.0
1915–19	22.7	–	25.0	14.7	..	–	21.3
1920–24	31.9	–	66.1	32.8	39.0	51.4	43.2
1925–29	22.5	–	8.6	18.2	25.0	22.9	18.3
1930–34	12.1	–	12.0	37.8	15.8	22.9	15.5
1935–39	11.4	–	15.1	9.1	5.2	11.5	11.8
1940–44	23.9	7.3	16.7	4.9	9.0	11.2	11.9
1945–49	27.6	7.1	23.3	13.2	7.2	16.8	17.9
1950–54	21.3	14.9	24.3	19.0	11.5	11.7	18.9
1955–59	36.6	12.4	18.4	22.0	6.1	13.8	16.8
1960–64*	21.5	1.9	20.8	16.0	10.8	6.1	12.8

Sources: Tilastotaulut Suomen Lähetysseuran työstä lähetysalueellaan Ambomaalla [Statistical tables concerning the work of the Finnish Mission Society in Ovamboland] 1910–1964. Appendices in the minutes of the missionaries' meetings, Hha, Archives of the Finnish Mission Society, National Archives of Finland; Registers of immigration of the parishes.

Notes:

1) The number of men who converted while at work outside Ovamboland is compared with the number of all "all converts", i.e. people baptised at adult baptismal days in the parishes (including children of converting women who were baptised together with their mothers) and the men who immigrated to the parishes after having been baptised in the south.

2) The figures for 1955–1959 and 1960–1964 probably slightly underestimate the proportion of converted migrant labourers. After the method of keeping the records was changed in the mid-1950s it was possible to baptize migrant workers directly into membership of their home parishes in Ovamboland. In such cases they were not registered as immigrants from the Police Zone, nor were they included in the parish immigration statistics used here to study the conversion of migrant workers. (See Notkola & Siiskonen, 2000, p. 118)

* Figures for 1962 are not included.

Where the figures in Table 8 point to something that could be characterised as the "minimum significance of migrant conversion", this factor emerges on quite a different scale when we look at its role in the christianization of men alone. The figures below show migrant converts as a proportion of all Ovambo men converting

in our six sample parishes taken together. Because of the source, it is again impossible to give one set of figures for the whole period, and therefore two series are used. The left-hand column indicates migrant converts as a proportion of all males converts, i.e. including themselves and men baptised on adult baptismal days in parishes with boys baptised together with their converting mothers. This column is comparable to the "all six together"-column in Table 8. Correspondingly, the right-hand column gives migrant converts as a proportion of all adult male converts, i.e. excluding the sons of converting mothers.[63]

1910–1914	8.8%	
1915–1919	35.9%	
1920–1924	64.4%	
1925–1929	42.2%	
1930–1934	33.5%	
1935–1939	26.3%	36.1%
1940–1944	23.7%	26.5%
1945–1949	38.0%	41.0%
1950–1954		50.5%
1955–1959		55.7%
1960–1964		42.9%

Some of the figures above are quite impressive, since occasionally over half of the new Christian men were baptised outside their home area, but even these do not tell us everything about the importance of migrant labour conversion, for apart from the direct effect on christianization (i.e. conversion in the south), migrant labour also seems to have had some indirect effects. This can be deduced from data on the Ovambo teachers who graduated from the Oniipa Teacher Training School, for example. This school produced 184 male teachers between 1913 and 1938, of whom some were obviously born Christians, but as many as 29 teachers (15.8%) had been baptised while at work in the south and a further 16 (8.7%) said that they had first had the idea of becoming Christian while employed as migrant workers, although they were not baptised until they had returned home.[64]

As far as the social status of the converts is concerned, little accurate information is available, and quantitative analysis would be out of the question, since the missionaries did not record the social background of their new parishioners. Even if they had done, there would still be the problem of finding a proper social model to compare the data with. For example, there seems to have been originally no social

63 The figures for the years 1910–1949 were obtained by combining information in the statistical tables concerning the work of Finnish Mission Society in Ovamboland and in the registers of immigration for the parishes of Oshigambo, Eenhana, Elim, Okahao, Tsandi and Nakayale. The figures for 1935–1964 are combinations of information in the parish registers of baptism and immigration.

64 L[iina] L[indström], Henkilötietoja Oniipan seminaarin käyneistä opettajista vuosilta 1913–1938 [Personal data about teachers who have graduated from Oniipa teacher training school 1913–1938], s.d., Pa, AELCIN.

group which could be termed a professional "middle class"[65]. The nucleus of such a class came into being only because of the activities of the missionaries and the colonial administration, in creating such new professionals as teacher, priest, nurse, interpreter and police boy.

For the present purposes we must be content with a two-category social classification and regard any convert as falling either into the class of the "nobility" or into that of the "commoners". The first category consists of members of the royal clans or families and other people of obviously high status in society, such as kings' counsellors (*omalenga*), regional headmen (*mwene goshikandjo*) and councillor headmen[66]. All the others may be taken as commoners. Such a simple classification is obviously not totally satisfactory, because there is actually no need to ask to which of these two social classes most converts belonged to; the answer is obvious. Such a categorisation is inevitable, however, because the sources do not reveal much about the social background of the converts. They do, however, tell us something about the interest shown by the nobility in Christianity. Also, some fragmentary information concerning the wealth of converts is available. Therefore, instead of trying to place the converts into precisely defined social categories, an attempt will be made in the following to describe the social status of converts in two ways: by revealing what is known about their economic wealth, and by bringing out some aspects that seem to have been peculiar to nobility's path to Christianity.

According to the missionaries, the majority of their converts were poor people, at least up to the Second World War.[67] Whether or not wealthier people also joined the church later is not recorded, mostly because the missionaries then had less to do with ordinary parish work and were therefore probably even less well informed about the wealth or position of the Christians than they were before the war. It is probable, though, that a greater number of wealthier people began to become adherents of the new religion in due course. It is very simple really: when the majority of people had become Christians, there were bound to be people with more than average wealth among them. McKittrick has stated that by the 1940s church membership began to extend to those who had economic status and power within society.[68] This was very probably the case, but we do not know how large a group of wealthier people there was among the Christians. What we do know, however, is

65 The only specially recognized professions in precolonial Ovamboland seem to have been those of blacksmith and diviner/healer. Since both of these professions were quite highly regarded, their practitioners might be looked on as a kind of middle class, although it might be more accurate to place the more powerful healers among elite. On the social status of these professions, see e.g. Loeb, 1962, p. 122–124, or Hiltunen, 1993, p. 39–40.

66 This term is taken to refer to members of a council of headmen ruling a kingless community under the supervision of the colonial administration.

67 K. Petäjä to M. Tarkkanen 23 Nov. 1922, Eac23, AFMS, NAF; Walde Kivisen laatima ehdotus vastauskirjelmäksi ja selostukseksi SWA:n hallituksen raportissaan Kansainliitolle esitettyihin syytöksiin lähetystyötä vastaan Ambomaalla [Walde Kivinen's proposal for a reply to the Government of SWA concerning the accusations which were made against missions in the Government's report to the League of Nations], minutes of the field administration board 15 Feb. 1939, Appendix 1, Hha17, AFMS, NAF.

68 McKittrick, 1995, p. 143, 165–166.

The women's road to Christianity was often long and difficult one, as their desire to be baptized sometimes met with strong opposition by their older relatives. This young woman was baptized well after the Second World War, as indicated by the fact that the ceremony was performed by an African priest, and it was therefore probably easier for her to fulfil her desire than for many women at the beginning of the century. (Photo by courtesy of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission)

that, according to Walde Kivinen, the rich and the powerful were becoming increasingly reluctant to leave paganism for Christianity by the end of the 1930s.[69]

The conclusion that the majority of converts were people of less than average personal wealth at the time of their conversion can also be drawn from the fact that the majority were young people, mainly in their late teens or early twenties, who would either have still been dependent on their parents, or have acquired economic independence but not yet been able to accumulate any considerable personal property.[70] Such a conclusion regarding the wealth of converts may actually be nothing but a truism, and it does not tell us anything about their social background, i.e. the wealth or status of their parents or kin.

Even though I have not looked into the early years of mission work in Ovamboland, I would venture to express one thought; It is possible that the very first people who were attracted by the missionaries' work belonged in most cases to the lowest stratum of society. In Uukwambi, where work was restarted in 1908, the services were attended at first mostly by the poorest people, who had come to

69 Walde Kivisen laatima ehdotus vastauskirjelmäksi..., minutes of the field administration board 15 Feb. 1939, Appendix 1, Hha17, AFMS, NAF.

70 According to McKittrick, this lack of wealth and status was actually one reason why young people approached the missions. Since Ovambo society disadvantaged its junior members in a number of ways, young people started to look on the missions as an alternative way to increased status and economic power. See McKittrick, 1995, particularly p. 128–130.

the mission station for help.[71] Rather similarly, Alho reported from Uukwaluudhi (where missionary work started in 1909) that paganism there was still practically undisturbed in 1918, and that the only adult Kwaluudhi staying at the mission station were two blind people, one neuropath and one person who was hungry.[72] Such examples do not mean that members of the elite might not sometimes have been in the forefront of christianization. There is a piece of information from Ombalantu showing that they could. When the Mbalantu began to convert in the 1940s, the local missionary made a particular note of the fact that majority of the first converts in 1940 were sons of headmen.[73]

If we now turn to the christianization of the nobility, we can first take a look at some information concerning the councillor headmen of Uukwanyama, Uukwambi and Ombalantu. Judging from their names[74], three out of the eight Uukwanyama councillor headmen in 1938 seem to have been Christians.[75] It is interesting that these three had two things in common: they were all former FMS teachers and sons of kings. Elia and Vilho Ueyulu were sons of King Ueyulu ya Hedimbi of Uukwanyama (who died in 1904) and Johannes Sekuza was a son of the last king of Ombandja.[76] Four years later half of the councillor headmen seem to have been baptised,[77] even though their Christianity may have been somewhat dubious, because in 1945 the local leading missionary complained that the majority of Uukwanyama headmen were apostates.[78] The elite group under the councillor headmen, i.e. the sub-headmen, seem to have still been predominately non-Christian in the late 1940s. Unusually many of them died in 1949 and 1950 and some successors were appointed. Again judging from their names, only three of the 16 who died were Christians, and four of the 11 appointed.[79]

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71 K. Koivu to H. Haahti 4 Jan. 1911, Eac16, AFMS, NAF; K. Koivu's Annual Report 1912 (Uukwambi), mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendix 14, Hha6, AFMS, NAF.

72 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 18 June 1918, Eac21, AFMS, NAF. The situation in Uukwaluudhi was actually not quite as gloomy as Alho's description would indicate. A couple of Kwaluudhi had already been baptized in 1912 and around the same time some members of the royal court were also said to be attending divine services occassionally. (See A. Hänninen to J. Mustakallio 16 May 1911, Eac16, AFMS, NAF & A. Hänninen's Annual Report 1912 [Uukwaluudhi], mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendix 15, Hha6, AMFS, NAF.)

73 K. Himanen's Annual Report 1940 (Ombalantu), mmm 15 Jan. 1941, Appendix 39, Hha19, AFMS, NAF.

74 My assumption here is that people with European or biblical forenames were Christians and the others not. Naturally it is not certain that this assumption is correct in every individual case, but it is valid enough for the purpose of this analysis. Although the missionaries decided in 1937 that Christians could also be baptized with "national" names, this did not alter the Christians' system of names very much, as they began to adopt forenames belonging to their own culture only in the late 1950s and 1960s. Therefore, practically all the people found in documents with a European or biblical forename must have been Christians. (See W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 30 Jan. 1937 and V. Alho to U. Paunu 11 Oct. 1937, Eac38, AFMS, NAF: mmm 31 Aug. 1937 §26 and Appendices 11 & 11a, Hha15, AFMS, NAF: Saarelma-Maunumaa, 1997, p. 74–78, 195–196, 232–234.)

75 Copy C.H.L. Hahn to L.S. Amery (MP) 11 Jan. 1938, 2/11, A450, NAN.

76 L[iina] L[indström], Henkilötietoja Oniipan seminaarin käyneistä opettajista vuosilta 1913–1938 (s.d.) Pa, AELCIN.

77 NCO Annual Report 1942, p. 4–5, 11/1, NAO, NAN.

78 A. W. Björklund to U. Paunu 30 Dec. 1945, Eac41, AFMS, NAF.

79 NCO Annual Reports 1949, p. 1 and 1950, p.1, 12/2, NAO, NAN.

None of the four Ombalantu councillor headmen in 1935 were Christians[80] and the situation was the same in 1947. In the same year only one of the four Uukwambi councillors was a Christian, but the next year two non-Christian headmen died and two Christians were appointed.[81] In 1952 all the Uukwambi councillor headmen were either Christians or at least had participated in the education provided by the mission, since they were able to sign the border agreement with Ombalantu. None of the Ombalantu headmen could do this, however, and they had to ratify the document with their thumb prints.[82]

It would naturally be rather risky to draw any far-reaching conclusions from the above information because it is quite fragmentary. Ombalantu is an obvious case, though, as neither the people nor their leaders were Christian. In Uukwanyama, and particularly in Uukwambi, the top level of society seems to have been leaning rather more towards Christianity than the rest of the population. On the other hand, the fact that there were quite a few Christians (or baptised men anyway) among the councillor headmen does not necessarily mean that Christianity appealed to the Ovambo elite more than it appealed to the commoners. It may simply reflect the aims of the colonial administration. It may be that the administration pressed communities to choose suitable Christians, preferably former teachers, as councillor headmen because these people had some abilities which helped them in their administrative duties: they could read, write and manage some arithmetic. Therefore, if christianization of the elite is to be studied, it would probably be better to look at the sub-headmen rather than the councillor headmen, as they were less of a creation of the colonial administration and more representative of what might be called an original Ovambo elite. But, alas, very little is known about the religious affiliation of the members of this group. The only thing that can safely be said about them, based on the information from Uukwanyama, is that they did not seem to be in the vanguard of christianization.

Having said this about the kingless communities, it is now time to take a look at the royalty. Let us start with Uukwanyama and Uukwambi, communities which had their kingships abolished by the colonial administration, in 1917 and 1932 respectively. Neither of these ever had a Christian ruler. King Iipumbu of Uukwambi appears to have leaned slightly towards Christianity a couple of times in the 1920s[83] but that did not lead to baptism, and when he was eventually baptised on his deathbed in 1959 he became a Roman Catholic[84]. His children, on the other hand, adopted so many ideas from the missionaries' teaching in the mid-1920s that they demanded a ban on working on Sundays, for example, and finally two of the king's sons were baptised in 1929.[85]

80 Headman Kalipi's testimony for the SWA Commission. Quoted in McKittrick,1995, p.119.
81 NCO Annual Reports 1947, p. 1 and 1948, p. 1, 12/2, NAO, NAN.
82 Border agreement between Ombalantu and Ukuambi 3 Nov. 1952, 3/11, NAO, NAN.
83 O. Tylväs Annual Report 1922 (Elim), mmm 10-11 Jan. 1923, Appendix 11, Hha8; O. Tylväs Annual Report 1926 (Elim), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appendix 21, Hha9. Both in AFMS, NAF.
84 Hartmann, 1998, p. 268.
85 O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 31 March 1929, Eac29; O. Tylväs Annual Report 1926 (Elim), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appendix 21, Hha9. Both in AFMS, NAF.

The first Ovambo community to have a Christian ruler was Ondonga. This took place in 1912, when King Kambonde kaNgula was baptised on his deathbed, while his brother and successor, Nambala, converted later the same year and was renamed Martin. The king's example was in due course followed by several other royals, including his sister Viktorina in 1914, his powerful mother Mutaleni (Frieda) in 1918, and his nephew and successor Kambonde kaNamene (Eino Johannes) who was baptised in 1919 at the age of around 11 years.[86]

There is not very much to tell about royal interest in Christianity in Ongandjera, although it is worth noting that the old king Shanika na Shilongo (1887–1931) allowed the missionaries to teach the people freely with the exception of the king's headmen, relatives and servants. He also appears to have been ready to enforce this order, as he did in 1925 when he ordered the homesteads of one teacher and one rank and file Christian to be demolished because the residents had tried to proselytize among wealthy people, according to the local missionary.[87] Old Shanika's orders and actions show that, for some reason, he was concerned about the possibility that the Ongandjera nobility might become Christian. Christianization of commoners was obviously nothing to worry about because the king was in general quite sympathetic towards the missionaries and their aims. In any case, he did not fully succeed in his aim to prevent the Ongandjera nobility from becoming Christian because one of his daughters joined the congregation in 1926. There also appear to have been at least some Christian headmen in Ongandjera at that time.[88] The first Christian king of Ongandjera was Ushona (Wilpard) Shiimi, who ascended the throne in 1949. He had converted in 1939 and had been the actual ruler of Ongandjera since 1941 on behalf of his uncle Shanika Iipinge.[89]

In Uukwaluudhi the royal interest in Christianity had its ups and downs during the long reign of King Mwala gwa Shilongo (1909–1959). In 1922 the king allowed himself to be taught privately and he was said to have been on the verge of conversion, but he suddenly lost interest the following year, even though he was still friendly towards the missionaries. According to the missionary Järvinen, the king's decision not to become a Christian was caused by his concern that he might lose his kingship by doing so.[90] A rather similar episode was seen in 1925–1926, when the king was again leaning towards Christianity. He attended school for several months, often discussed religious matters with the missionary, made Sunday a day of rest and even promised to give up polygyny. His example also brought other

86 M. Rautanen to J. Mustakallio 3 Dec. 1912 and to M. Tarkkanen 5 Feb. 1918, Eac2; J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 11 Aug. 1912, Eac17. All in AFMS, NAF: Olukonda parish records, main book 2, p. 112, 137, 146, 296.

87 N. Väänänen to M. Tarkkanen 19 May 1914, Eac19, AFMS, NAF; N. Väänänen to M. Tarkkanen 20 June 1916, Eac20; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 14 Aug. 1918, Eac21; E. Lehto's Annual Report 1925 (Ongandjera), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1926, Appendix 20, Hha9. All in AFMS, NAF.

88 E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 25 May 1926, Eac26, AFMS, NAF.

89 NCO Annual Report 1941, p. 4, 2/18, A450, NAN: Okahao parish records, main book 2, p. 126.

90 S. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 17 Oct. 1922 & A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 18 Aug. 1923, Eac23; S. Aarni's Annual Report 1922 (Uukwaluudhi/Uukolonkadhi), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1923, Appendix 12 & A. Järvinen's Annual Report 1923 (Uukwaluudhi/Uukolonkadhi), mmm 8 Jan. 1924, Appendix 19, Hha8. All in AFMS, NAF.

members of the royal clan or court to the mission schools, including his son, sister and nephew,[91] but again Mwala decided to reverse his course during the latter half of 1926. He did not give up his wives, but instead he gave up attending school, as did also other members of the royal clan.[92] After that the king's attitude towards Christianity appears to have been somewhat ambiguous. He was friendly but indifferent about religion, even though he frequently attended church services on Sundays and took a nap during them. The other members of the royal clan were now said to have been firmly attached to paganism.[93]

The awakening of the Uukwaluudhi royal circles in the late 1930s had nothing to do with the king, since his attitude towards Christianity had not changed. It was mostly the younger generation of the Uukwaluudhi nobility who began to associate with the missionaries. The process was started in 1936 by the king's youngest daughter, and a little later several of his children and his sister and nephew (the heir to the throne) were at mission schools.[94] Unfortunately it is impossible to say for sure whether this interest led to baptisms, but it probably did not. At least the king soon forbade his sister to convert and his relatives to attend school. He also stopped attending church services and visiting the mission station.[95] Whether royal baptisms took place later we do not know. Parish work in Uukwaluudhi was handed over to Ovambo pastors in the late 1940s, and after that missionaries did not report very much on what was happening there. As far as I know Mwala never converted[96], and the first Christian king of Uukwaluudhi was the young Josia Shikongo Taapopi, who ascended the throne in 1959 and was baptised two years later.[97]

The christianization of royalty was usually a rather difficult process, as the story above shows. The Ongandjera and Uukwaluudhi cases demonstrate that the ruling monarchs, up to the Second World War at least, were very reluctant to convert or to allow anybody in their immediate surroundings to convert. This reluctance was

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91 A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 4 Nov. 1925, Eac25; A. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 20 June 1926, Eac26; S. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 26 April 1926 and 27 Aug. 1926, Eac26; A. Järvinen's Annual Report 1925 (Uukwaluudhi/Uukolonkadhi), mmm 13–14 Jan 1926, Appendix 21, Hha9; V. Alho, Report on the inspection visit to western tribes 15–27 June 1926, Uukwaluudhi, Hha9. All in AFMS, NAF.

92 S. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 30 Nov. 1926, Eac26; S. Aarni's Annual Report 1926 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appendix 23, Hha9; V. Alho, Report on parish inspections which were carried out from 20 to 31 Aug. 1927, Uukwaluudhi, Hha9. All in AFMS, NAF.

93 S. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 13 June 1932 and S. Markkanen to M. Tarkkanen 31 May 1932, Eac31; S. Aarni's Annual Report 1929 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 33, Hha11; Ibid. 1932, mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendix 25, Hha12; O. Aho's Annual Report 1934 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 36, Hha13. All in AFMS, NAF.

94 S. Aarni to U. Paunu 9 Oct. 1936, Eac37 & 5 March 1937, Eac38 & 29 March 1940, Eac39; S. Aarni's Annual Report 1939 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1940, Appendix 36, Hha18. All in AFMS, NAF.

95 S. Aarni's Annual Report 1941 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 21–22 Jan. 1942, Appendix 38, Hha19, AFMS, NAF.

96 Dr Inkeri Saloheimo, who met Mwala short while before the king's death, does not actually say that he was still non-Christian, but this is quite obvious from the description she gives of the poor, deserted king. (See I. Saloheimo's circular 3/1959, Eac48, AFMS, NAF.)

97 Bantoesakekommissaris Ovamboland Jaarverslag 1959, p. 1 and 1960, p. 1, 1/15/6/1 BAC55–56, NAN; L. Aho's circular no. 5, 27 Nov. 1961, Eac49, AFMS, NAF; Tsandi parish records, main book 4, p. 90.

probably mainly caused by their concern that too close an association with the new religion might harm their position.[98] A king's conversion remained difficult as long as a considerable majority of his subjects believed that he had to perform certain rites which were essentially "pagan" but were considered to be essential for the well-being, or even survival, of the community. Had he converted, the people might have been afflicted with fears that the future of their community was threatened, whereupon the next logical step would have been to replace a king who did not carry out his vital duties. This logic may also explain why Shanika na Shilongo and Mwala gwa Shilongo did not want the nobility to become Christian. Had there been powerful Christians in the kingdom, they could have tried to press the king to abandon the "heathen" rites, and his position would have been endangered. Therefore royal conversion, particularly by the ruling monarch himself, was safe only when the old beliefs connected with the king's person had been weakened by christianization, by the influence of missionary teaching among non-Christians and by other ideas from the outside world, e.g. those brought in by migrant labourers.

The conversion of the Ondonga kings obviously ran contrary to the above logic. They converted too early. Only a fraction of the Ndonga were Christian in 1912, and it is doubtful whether the new ideas had yet had any substantial effect on the beliefs surrounding the king's person.[99] Kambonde's conversion was not very problematic. He was baptised on his deathbed, and even though he had already given orders that were directed against traditional beliefs in 1911,[100] he only ventured to make his wish to become Christian publicly known in April 1912,[101] i.e. four months before his death. He may have already known then that he was a dying man[102], so that his conversion could not do any long-standing harm to his position as king. Consequently, he was able to fulfil his obviously sincere desire to become a Christian. But why did Martin convert? According to some missionaries, Kambonde's rapprochement with the missionaries had caused considerable irritation among his people, including members of his court, and had also created friction between the king and his strong-willed mother Mutaleni.[103] Martin must have known this, but he was still willing to take the risk and become Christian. The extent of this risk was clearly seen in 1913.[104] One possible reason why Martin con-

98 See chapter "Missionaries' activities and the changing status...".

99 It should be noted, however, that by 1912 the missionaries had already been working in Ondonga for some forty years, so that their ideas may have had some effect on beliefs connected with the king's person, even though there is no evidence of this. Another point worth noting is the span between the commencement of missionary work in a community and the conversion of its king. In Ondonga and Ongandjera it was around forty years and in Uukwaluudhi around fifty. Looked at this way, it is less obvious that the Ondonga kings converted "too early".

100 J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 10 Nov. 1911, Eac16, AFMS, NAF.

101 J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 26 April 1912, Eac17, AFMS, NAF.

102 Wehanen wrote that the king had died of "gall bladder disease" from which he had suffered for a long time. (J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 11 Aug. 1912, Eac17, AFMS, NAF.)

103 R. Rautanen to J. Mustakallio 6 Jan. 1911, Eac16; J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 26 April 1912 and 11 Aug. 1912, Eac17; M. Wehanen to S. and J. Mustakallio 6 Nov 1912, Eac17. All in AFMS, NAF.

104 There appears to have been an attempt to replace Martin with a non-Christian king. This issue will be discussed in detail later.

verted may have been a sincere wish to become Christian which made him act without proper consideration of the potential consequences. Two things speak for Martin's sincerity: Firstly, he appears to have already been publicly leaning towards Christianity early in 1911 at the latest. Secondly, during the first year of his reign he cooperated closely with the missionaries in order to rule his country according to Christian principles.[105] On the other hand, Martin's dissociation from the Christian way of life in the mid-1910s[106] might speak against his sincerity. Another possible explanation for the king's conversion could be the one given by Emil Liljeblad, that he became Christian because he was afraid that when the Germans eventually conquered Ondonga they would replace him with a Christian king unless he was Christian himself.[107] But there is still one more possible explanation, as suggested by McKittrick, namely that Martin, who was a young man, decided to rely on membership of the Christian community as part of his strategy to resist the attempts of the Ndonga elders and elite to control him.[108] If that indeed was his reason, he misjudged the situation, because his association with missionaries raised considerable opposition against him.

If the royal path to Christianity was often stony, keeping to the straight and narrow path after baptism was equally difficult. The striking thing about royal Christians was their inability to keep their behaviour within the limits necessary to avoid conflicts with the missionaries. In 1934 the presiding missionary, Viktor Alho, described the situation in Ondonga by saying that practically all baptised royals had returned to paganism and supported pagan practices.[109] Indeed, a Ndonga royal who had not been disciplined by the church at some time during his or her life was an exception rather than the rule. To start with King Martin, he was excluded from the Eucharist for some time in the 1910s for having a concubine, and was excommunicated from 1928 to 1935 for having had at least one pagan girl as a concubine for several years.[110] Martin's flesh was weaker than his Christian mind, since his excommunication did not stop him issuing decrees which were intended to promote a Christian way of life.[111] As soon as Martin was readmitted, his mother, Frieda (excommunicated 1935–1939) and several other royals were excommunicated for participating in *ohango*. Frieda had also been previously excluded from the Eucharist.[112] A year before Martin's readmission, the heir to the

105 E.g. M. Rautanen to J. Mustakallio 3 Jan 1913 and 7 April 1913, Eac2; R. Rautanen to J. Mustakallio 6 Jan. 1911 & H. Haahti to J. Mustakallio 10 Nov. 1911, Eac16. All in AFMS, NAF.

106 E.g. M. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 30 Nov. 1916, Eac2; E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 24 Oct. 1916 & E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 10 April 1917, Eac20. All in AFMS, NAF.

107 E. Liljeblad to J. Mustakallio 5 Dec. 1912, Eac17, AFMS, NAF.

108 McKittrick, 2002, p. 144.

109 V. Alho to K.A. Paasio 25 Oct. 1934, Eac35, AFMS, NAF.

110 M. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 25 Feb. 1918, Eac2; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 13 Dec. 1926, Eac26 & 7 Feb. 1927, Eac27 & 13 April 1928, Eac28. All in AFMS, NAF: Olukonda parish records, main book 2, p. 112.

111 E.g. V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 18 Feb. 1928 & I. Saukkonen to M. Tarkkanen 28 May 1928, Eac28, AFMS, NAF.

112 V. Alho to K.A. Paasio 21 Jan. 1935 & V. Alho to the church administration of Ovamboland 24 April 1935 & W. Kivinen to K.A. Paasio 16 June 1935, Eac36, AFMS, NAF: Olukonda parish records, main book 2, p. 146.

throne, Eino Johannes, and his younger brother, Martin, were excommunicated, both obviously for having concubines. They were readmitted only in 1949, i.e. seven years after Eino Johannes' ascension to the throne.[113] After that the king was said to have had several mistresses, and Martin soon became polygynous.[114]

There is not very much information concerning the standards of royal Christianity in communities other than Ondonga, although it is known that King Wilpard Shiimi of Ongandjera was excommunicated five years after his baptism (i.e. in 1944) and remained outside the church until 1958. The reason was something like "abandoning Christianity", which probably had something to do with the *ohango* that was arranged in 1944, involving the participation of all the royals of Ongandjera.[115]

Even at the risk of being repetitious, I would claim that the example of the Ondonga royal family shows that for a long time being a member of the Ovambo elite and being a "good Christian" (as defined by the missionaries) entailed irreconcilable lifestyles. It appears that in order to be a "good Christian", the members of the elite would have had to abandon so many privileges or deeply rooted modes of behaviour that in many cases they were simply not willing do this. On the other hand, it may be that it was difficult for such people to be "good Christians" because that might have involved some forms of behaviour which were contrary to that expected of the elite.

The profile of an Ovambo convert can be summarised in the following way: Throughout the period studied here the converts were predominantly young. At the beginning of the century they were also predominantly male, and very many of these young males converted while they were on work contracts in the Police Zone. Women made up the majority of the converts from the mid-1920s onwards, and they were more eager converts than the men from the 1940s on, in the sense that they were more numerous among the converts than they were in the total population. Although little information is available on the social status of converts, the majority of them were obviously commoners. Conversion of members of the Ovambo elite was by no means unknown even at the beginning of the century, but there is some information to indicate that they were often quite reluctant to become Christians. Furthermore, converted members of the elite seem to have had unusually great difficulties in keeping their behaviour within the limits deemed to be proper for Christians.

It would be useless, and possibly risky, to compare the profile of an Ovambo convert with similar information from other mission fields in Africa, because the

113 V. Alho to church administration of Ovamboland 24 April 1935, Eac36; V. Alho to T. Vapaavuori 19 April 1948 and 26 April 1949, Eac43; V. Alho's Annual Report 1934 (General report of Ovamboland mission), mmm 9–10. Jan. 1935, Appendix 1, Hha13. All in AFMS, NAF: Olukonda parish records, main book 2, p. 296.

114 L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 14 May 1950 & 8 Dec. 1950, Eac44 & 11 Aug. 1952 Eac45, AFMS, NAF.

115 S. Aarni's Annual Report 1944 (Ongandjera), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1945, Appendix 32, Hha20, AFMS, NAF: Okahao parish records, main book 2, p. 126.

circumstances in which conversion took place may have differed from one area to another, but it might be of some interest to quote Professor Hastings' generalization about nineteenth and early twentieth-century African converts:

> "In the nineteenth century Christian converts tended by and large to be ex-slaves, outcasts from their society, refugees looking for a safe haven... By the early twentieth century the picture was different. While the Christian community tended to be young, in most places it was drawn from central elements within a settled society, though its initiators were often outsiders, traders, clerks, or migrant workers. In a world where the skills which Christians learned were quickly becoming politically and economically valuable, there was anyway an automatic adjustment of status. In the background and early personal history, a catechist might not have been someone of social importance, but he became one because of his new religious status. Very few chiefs of any importance became Christians in this period - though some village headmen did - but increasingly they sent their sons to be educated by missionaries. They could see where the new power lay, and their very action in ensuring that their own offspring could participate in it validated it socially for others."[116]

Standards of Christianity among the Ovambo Christians (the end product)

"Ndonga Christians wallow in shit"[117] and "under the cover of Jesus [the Ovambo parishes] smell of decay"[118] were some of the more colourful expressions which Finnish missionaries used to describe the standard of Ovambo Christians. Although most missionaries used more correct language, the main message remains the same; They were not really satisfied with the Christianity of their adherents, not with their devotion, not with their knowledge of Christian dogma, nor with their morals. This finding is actually, more or less, a truism,[119] because the Christianity of African converts was bound to fail to meet the standards which the missionaries set for "good Christians". Baptism very seldom marked a sudden or total transformation away from "traditional" beliefs and cultural practises to ones which were perfectly in accordance with Christian doctrines.[120] Yet at the same time this was exactly what the missionaries, the Protestants in particular, expected their converts to accomplish. As this was in most cases impossible, African Christians indulged in deeds, such as adultery or practising magic, which "good Christians" should not have done. Such backsliding then made the missionaries regard the Af-

116 Hastings, 1994, p. 461.
117 E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 27 May 1919, Eac21, AFMS, NAF.
118 I. Saukkonen to the Ovamboland church administration 25 March 1935, Eac36, AFMS, NAF.
119 Cf. Ranger, 1993, p. 184.
120 E.g. Carmody, 1988, p. 193; Gray, 1990, p. 77–78; Kirby, 1994, p. 67.

ricans as very imperfect Christians, and perhaps even as inherently incapable of becoming good Christians at all.[121]

The situation in Ovamboland was similar to that in Africa in general. Because of their Lutheran bigotry, the missionaries set the requirements for good Christians strictly according to their own view of what the Scriptures and Lutheran dogmas required. No allowances were made for local conditions, because they might have led to syncretism, which the missionaries feared more than anything else.[122] As a result, they produced something like the extensive list of "thou shalt nots" quoted earlier. The demands on Christians were unreasonable, and even some early twentieth-century missionaries, albeit surprisingly few, recognized the incompatibility between these and social environment in which the Ovambo Christians lived. These few missionaries actually took quite an understanding view of the Ovambo Christians, for to their mind, the low standard of behaviour was not surprising, because the Christians were converts for whom the total abandonment of old customs and beliefs was understandably difficult, particularly when they were living among heathens.[123] Still, the excessive demands were maintained. It is no wonder, therefore, that the mission director in 1937, Uno Paunu, answered a question on whether the Ovambo Christians were really Christians by saying that the answer could only be very slightly affirmative and was more likely to be negative.[124]

Although the conclusion that the standards of Ovambo Christianity failed to meet up to the missionaries' requirements is in general a truism, there are some aspects which are worth a closer look. Let us begin with the standard of their knowledge of Christian dogma and of Biblical history. These were occasionally evaluated when presiding missionaries or mission directors inspected the parishes. In 1911 the assistant director, Hannu Haahti, asked the missionaries to evaluate the Christian knowledge of station school pupils on a scale from 1 (poor) to 4 (good), and the mean grade given was 2.6 among pupils at the missionaries' classes and 2.2. among those with Ovambo teachers (i.e. between tolerable and satisfactory). The knowledge at out-station schools was not evaluated, but was probably much lower because Haahti strongly criticized the Ovambo teachers for their extremely inefficient teaching. When the director, Matti Tarkkanen, evaluated Christian knowledge in nine parishes in the next decade, the grade was satisfactory in seven and satisfactory for men and tolerable for women in two. Later, in 1937, the director at

121 See e.g. Beidelman, 1974, p. 241–245; Beidelman, 1982, p. 127–128, 137–139, 148–151; Gray, 1990, p. 75, 81–82; Hastings, 1994, p. 554–555, 576, 579–580, 586–590; Ranger, 1994, p. 278; Isichei, 1995, p. 241, 267; McKittrick, 1995, p. 286; Luig, 1997, p. 164–169.

122 Cf. McKittrick's comments about missionaries' Eurocentric way of recognizing the co-existence of Christian and pagan identities among Christians. (McKittrick, 1995, p. 169–170)

123 A. Pettinen to J. Mustakallio 27 March 1913, Eac18; O. Aho to K.A. Paasio 5 April 1935, Eac36; R. Rautanen's Annual Report 1917 (Ondangwa), mmm 15 Jan. 1918, Appendix 1c, Hha7; K. Petäjä's Annual Report 1920 (Oshigambo), mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 14b, Hha8; M. Anttila's Annual Report 1929 (Oshigambo girls' school), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 21, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF. Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911-12, p. 20–21, Lb, AELCIN.

124 Paunu, Uno, Kertomukset Afrikan lähetysalalla vuonna 1937 toimitetuista tarkastuksista, (Report on inspection of Ovamboland mission field by mission director Paunu) p. 15, Dga, AELCIN.

that time, Uno Paunu, evaluated standards of knowledge in four parishes, giving separate grades for men and women and found knowledge to be satisfactory in four of these instances, tolerable once and poor three times.[125] There is less detailed information concerning the post-war period, but in general the level of knowledge seems to have declined quickly. Erkki Lehto reported in 1945 that knowledge about the Christian faith among first year students at the Oniipa Teacher Training School was amazingly poor, and nine years later director Vapaavuori noted that general knowledge of Christian truths had fallen off "flagrantly" since his latest inspection in 1946.[126] But it was not only the rank and file who had difficulties in forming the correct concepts; some of the more educated Christians also had quite interesting views: One teacher in the 1930s taught that the devil was Jesus' younger brother, while one pastor was convinced that St. Paul and Luther had lived at the same time. Some twenty years later another teacher, who had graduated from the teacher training school, taught that Caesar in the sentence "render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's" meant the devil, and therefore Christians should render unto the devil the things which were the devil's.[127]

It was not only standards of knowledge which the missionaries regarded as poor but also the Christians' religious devotion. The striking thing in the missionary records is their constant opinion throughout the period studied here that Ovambo Christianity was of a very formal nature. The Christians attended church services, said their prayers and could even quote the Bible correctly, but what most of them still lacked was the "correct" understanding of such concepts as guilt, sin, repentance and salvation.[128] In the same vein Pinehas Kambonde, the assistant dean of Ondonga, described the standard of Christianity in 1956 by saying that

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125 Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle... 1911–1912, p. 10–11, 54–55, Lb; Pöytäkirjoja tehty tarkastustilaisuuksissa Ambomaalla 1925, p. 3, 14, 18, 32, 37, 41, 46, 52, 56, Dga; Paunu, Uno, Kertomukset Afrikan..., p. 36, 43, 57, 82, Dga. All in AELCIN.

126 E. Lehto's Annual Report 1945 (Oniipa), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1946, Appendix 6, Hha20, AFMS, NAF; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 60, Dga, AELCIN.

127 E. Lehto, Vastaus veli N. Väänäsen lausuntoon Ambomaan opettajaseminaarin työsuunnitelmasta 7 Aug. 1930, Eac30; A. Glad to K.A. Paasio s.d. 1934, Eac35; K. Petäjä to T. Vapaavuori 10 Dec. 1951, Eac44. All in AFMS, NAF.

128 E.g. A. Pettinen to J. Mustakallio 27 March 1913, Eac18; K. Petäjä to M. Tarkkanen 31 Dec. 1917, Eac20; M. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 20 Sept. 1921 & 31 May 1923, Eac2; M. Väänänen to M. Tarkkanen 13 Aug. 1923, Eac23; A. Glad to K.A. Paasio s.d. 1934 & 8 Dec. 1934, Eac35; I. Saukkonen to Ovamboland church administration 25 March 1935, Eac36; I. Saukkonen to K.A. Paasio 3 July 1935, Eac36; E. Tulokas to K.A. Paasio 9 March 1935, Eac36; W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 12 June 1936, Eac37; W. Björklund's summary of the Uukwanyama pastors' annual reports 1938, Eac38; W. Björklund to U. Paunu 15 Dec. 1938, Eac38; E. Lehto's Annual Report 1918 (Onayena), mmm 24 Feb. 1919, Appendix 14, Hha7; K. Petäjä's Annual Report 1920 (Oshigambo), mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 14b, Hha8; K. Petäjä's Annual Report 1929 (Engela), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 23, Hha11; I. Saukkonen's Annual Report 1933 (Ongwediva), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1934, Appendix 31, Hha12; W. Kivinen's Annual Report 1936 (Oniipa), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1937, Appendix 2, Hha15; S. Hirvonen's Annual Report 1943 (Uukwanyama schools), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1944, Appendix 19, Hha20; A.W. Björklund's Annual Report 1944 (Uukwanyama), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1945, Appendix 19, Hha20; E.J. Pentti's Annual Report 1951 (Oniipa teacher training school), mmm 24–25 Jan. 1952, Appendix 4, Hha23; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1951 (Uukwanyama), mmm 24–25 Jan. 1952, Appendix 23, Hha23. All in AFMS, NAF.

there were three kinds of Christians in Ovamboland: 1) true Christians, 2) those whose involvement in church affairs was based on "the whip marks of law on their backs" and 3) those who were totally indifferent but just tried to avoid being excommunicated. According to Kambonde, the second and third groups had grown very large.[129] This far-from-total devotion was also manifested by the Christians' reluctance to fulfil their financial obligations towards the church. Thus some 59 per cent of members in 1953 did not pay their parish fees, and 24 per cent had not done so for several years.[130] Although these failures were probably partly caused by the drought-related problems experienced by the subsistence economy, they still show that the Christians clearly did not give very high priority to church membership fees. In some extreme, but by no means rare cases, devotions could cease completely when Christians left the congregations and possibly returned back to their original religion. In 1920 the missionary Aatu Järvinen, for example, removed some 20 per cent of the Ondangwa Christians from the parish records because they had either gone missing during the great famine of 1915–1916 or had "returned to paganism" after that. In a similar manner Tuure Vapaavuori rectified the parish records of Onayena in 1936 by removing 340 people (11 per cent of the congregation) because they had returned to heathenism, in addition to which there were 157 people of whom nobody had heard anything for years and 198 people (some 7 per cent of the parishioners) who had had nothing to do with the church for a long time.[131]

From the missionaries' point of view the Christians' lack of morals was even more worrying than their lack of devotion, and the records are filled with constant lamentations about the prevalence of immorality in the Ovambo parishes.[132] It

129 E.J. Pentti's Annual Report 1956 (Ondonga), mmm 9–12 Jan. 1957, Appendix 9, Hha28, AFMS, NAF.

130 Hynönen, Erkki, Hengellinen ja siveellinen tila Ambomaan seurakunnissamme. In Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani Afrikan työaloillemme... 20.6.–20.12.1954, Appendix 33, p. 220, Dga, AELCIN. Reluctance to pay parish fees already existed before the World War II. (See e.g. V. Alho, Seurakuntatarkastus Onajenassa [Onayena parish inspection] 11.–12.8.1934, Hha12;O. Aho's Annual Report 1934 (Tsandi), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 36, Hha13, AFMS, NAF.)

131 T. Vapaavuori to U. Paunu 28 Sept. 1936, Eac37 & A. Järvinen's Annual Report 1920 (Ondangwa–Onandjokwe), mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 7, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.

132 E.g. O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1910 (Oniipa) & A. Hänninen's Annual Report 1910 (Tsandi), mmm 17 Jan. 1911, Appendices 2 and 10, Hha6; A. Glad's Annual Report 1914 (Oshigambo), mmm 20 Jan. 1915, Appendix 14, Hha7; K.J. Petäjä's Annual Report 1917 (Oshigambo), mmm 15 Jan. 1918, Appendix 10, Hha7; A. Hänninen's Annual Reports 1922 and 1923 (Engela), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1923, Appendix 20 and mmm 8 Jan. 1924, Appendix 20, Hha8; V. Alho's Annual Report 1926 (Oniipa/Oshitayi), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appendix 2, Hha9; K.J. Petäjä's Annual Report 1928 (Engela) & O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1928 (Elim), mmm 21 Jan. 1929, unnumbered appendices, Hha10; W. Björklund's Annual Report 1929 (Onayena), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 15, Hha11; O. Aho's Annual Report 1930 (Elim), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendix 34b, Hha12; T. Vapaavuori's Annual Report 1935 (Onayena) & H. Saari's Annual Report 1935 (Elim), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendices 12 and 32, Hha14; Yleiskatsaus Ambolähetykseen 1941 [general report on Ovambo mission], mmm 21–22 Jan. 1942, Appendix 1, Hha19; V. Alho's Annual Report 1943 (general report) & H. Saari's Annual Report 1943 (Oshigambo/Oshitayi) & A.W. Björklund's Annual Report 1943 (Uukwanyama), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1944, Appendix of §2 and Appendices 14 and 17, Hha20; V. Alho's Annual Report 1951 (Onayena/Onyaanya/ Ontananga/ Olukonda), mmm 24–25 Jan. 1952, Appendix 1, Hha23; E.J. Pentti's Annual Report 1956 (Ondonga), mmm 9–12 Jan. 1957, Appendix 9, Hha28; E. Pennanen's Annual Report 1959 (Okongo), mmm 18–20

was not only the rank and file Christians who found it difficult to conform to the sexual morals as laid down by the missionaries, but also some of the more trusted Christians. For example, of the 184 male teachers who graduated from the Oniipa Teacher Training School between 1913 and 1938, twenty (i.e. 11 per cent) had been either discharged or temporarily suspended from office by 1938, and in fifteen cases one reason, perhaps the sole one, was a "sexual offence".[133] Several teachers were discharged on these ground later as well, including one prominent linguist and hymn writer of whom missionaries had had great hopes, who committed an unspecified sexual offence in 1951, was discharged and was then appointed Tribal Secretary of Uukwaluudhi by the colonial administration, whereupon he became polygynous.[134] This teacher was not the most prominent Christian to run into trouble because of his "immoral" deeds, however, as a few pastors shared his fate. At least four pastors were found guilty of adultery or other offences of a sexual nature between 1931 and 1952.[135]

Not only did missionaries regard the standards of Ovambo Christianity as rather poor, but they also considered it to have become poorer in the course of the twentieth century. McKittrick seems to suggest that this lowering of Christian standards was partly ostensible.[136] I do not agree, because it seems that the mean standard of

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Jan. 1960, unnumbered appendix, Hha31; V. Alho, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista Ambomaalla 1939 [report on parish inspections], Hhb2. All in AFMS, NAF.

133 L[iina] L[indström], Henkilötietoja Oniipan seminaarin käyneistä opettajista vuosilta 1913–1938, historical data on people, AELCIN.

134 See L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 9 March 1951, 28 Nov. 1952 and 7 Dec. 1953, Eac44–45; L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori and V. Kivinen 23 Jan. 1953, Eac45; U. Karhunen to T. Vapaavuori 3 Jan. 1953, Eac45; I. Saloheimo's circular [to friends in Finland] no. 3 of 1959, Eac47; L. Lindström's Annual Report 1952 (schools), mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendix 19, Hha24. All in AFMS, NAF. Cf. Lahja Lehtonen's view of the teacher in question (Lehtonen, 1999, p. 102). For other cases of teachers having been discharged because of moral misconducts, see the minutes of the school committee in Aad AELCIN.

135 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 8 June 1931 & W. Björklund to M. Tarkkanen 4 June 1931 & E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 2 Nov. 1931, Eac30; K. Himanen to T. Vapaavuori 27 Aug. 1947, Eac42; V. Alho to T. Vapaavuori 25 Sept. 1948, Eac43; V. Alho to T. Vapaavuori 26 April 1949, Eac43; B. Eriksson to T. Vapaavuori 29 April 1952, Eac45; V. Alho's Annual Report 1940 (general report), mmm 22–23 Jan. 1941, Appendix 1, Hha19; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1952 (Uukwanyama), mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendix 26, Hha24; B. Eriksson to O. Vuorela 15 Aug. 1955, Hha26. All in AFMS, NAF.

136 McKittrick (1995, p. 269–273; see also 2002, p. 113, 224, 241 endnote 28, 245) argues that before the Second World War missionaries would have mostly "turned a blind eye" to those transgressions which Christians committed against acceptable Christian behaviour. They did this because they were struggling to increase the convert population and therefore could scarcely afford to uphold unbending Christian standards. Only when the Lutherans had a secure foothold in the Ovambo communities, in the 1950s, did the missionaries begin enforcing their bans on unacceptable customs such as polygyny. As a proof for her argument McKittrick states: "Records of expulsion for Lutheran churches also first began to be kept in the late 1940s and, in the west, in the 1950s. This appears to reflect a change in the frequency with which people were expelled for sins which previously had been punished in a milder manner..." (1995, p. 273). I cannot agree with McKittrick's interpretation, firstly because her proof is not valid. Records of expulsion as physically separate entities did indeed emerge in the 1940s and 1950s, but they had been kept long before that. Earlier records of expulsion can be found in the general register books, which contain also records of baptisms, deaths, marriages etc. Secondly, the missionaries obviously did not turn a blind eye to unacceptable behaviour during the early twentieth century. After all, they did not

Christianity among the Ovambo, as compared with the quite unchanged standard which the missionaries regarded as acceptable, was indeed lower during the latter part of the period considered here than at the beginning. This degeneration is a quite predictable outcome of the growth of the Christian community, as the missionaries themselves recognised. In a nutshell, their reasoning was something like the following: Conversion was always a socially, and sometimes even physically, risky matter when Christianity was a new phenomenon in an area, and therefore only truly devoted people converted and the faith remained pure. As Christianity became socially more acceptable, however, and particularly after it had become fashionable, more and more people converted, but most of them did so for worldly reasons instead of purely religious ones. As a result, there emerged a numerically large Christian community with less religious devotion and knowledge, but more leanings towards syncretism. This trend was further accelerated by the fact that baptismal education was bound to become more superficial as the number of catechumens increased.[137] Quite in line with this view was the way in which the missionaries perceived standards of Christianity in different communities. Up to the 1940s it was commonly stated that Christianity was on a higher level in the western communities, particularly Ongandjera and Ombalantu, than in the east. The worst Christians were said to be found in Ondonga, which was the oldest mission field and the most Christianized Ovambo community.[138] Thus when the FMS was faced

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even hesitate to excommunicate members of Ondonga royal family when these contravened acceptable principles of Christian behaviour. Furthermore, the mission director, Matti Tarkkanen, was of the opinion in 1925 that in many cases the missionaries actually had excommunicated Christians without any proper reason, while the missionary Lehto expressed clear opinion in the 1930s that the strict parish discipline maintained by the missionaries was in fact one thing which prevented some people from converting. Contrary to McKittrick's interpretation, it may in fact be rather that the enforcement of bans on unacceptable customs and behaviour was more slack in the 1950s than before. By then the congregations had been handed over to Ovambo pastors, who were thus also responsible for the enforcement of parish discipline, but they did not necessarily do this quite as effectively as the missionaries would have wanted, because in 1954 Erkki Hynönen complained that some pastors were actually promoting heathen practices instead of fighting against them. Indeed, one pastor was discharged the next year because he had been far too reluctant to punish adulterers. He had also shown de facto acceptance of Christian polygyny by recording mens' concubines in the parish records alongside their legal wives. (See Tarkkanen, Matti, Kertomus... tarkastusmatkasta 1925, p. 21, Dga, AELCIN; Hynönen, Erkki, Hengellinen ja siveellinen tila Ambomaan seurakunnissamme. In Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani.... 1954, Appendix 33, p. 215, Dga, AELCIN; B. Eriksson to O. Vuorela 15 Aug. 1955, Hha26, AFMS, NAF; Lehto, Erkki, Mitä voitaisiin tehdä pakanoiden saavuttamiseksi?, Mmm 31 Aug. 1937, Appendix 12.1, Hha15, AFMS, NAF)

137 See e.g. E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 17 Nov. 1920, Eac22; M. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 8 July 1922, Eac2; K. Petäjä to M. Tarkkanen 23 Nov. 1922, Eac23; W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 12 June 1936, Eac37; H. Saari to U. Paunu 30 July 1936, Eac37; M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1918 (Olukonda), mmm 24 Feb. 1919, Appendix 4a, Hha7; V. Alho's Annual Report 1927 (general report) & O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1927 (Elim), mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendices 1 and 32, Hha10; H. Saari's Annual Report 1941 (Oshigambo/Oshitayi), mmm 21–22 Jan. 1942, Appendix 19, Hha19; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1951 (Uukwanyama), mmm 24–25 Jan. 1952, Appendix 23, Hha23. All in AFMS, NAF.

138 See e.g. E. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 14 June 1924, Eac24; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 22 Jan. 1924 (sic), Eac25; E. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 6 Nov. 1926, Eac26; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 20 Jan. 1927, Eac27; E. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 24 March 1927, Eac27; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen14 March 1927 and 13 Aug. 1929, Eac27,29; A. Glad to K.A. Paasio 14 Sept.1935, Eac36; T. Vapaavuori

with financial stringencies in 1930, for example, Dr. Rainio suggested that Ondonga should be left without resident missionaries for the time being because so few Ndonga Christians "thirsted for God's word anyway".[139] Furthermore, at least the Christians' manners in Ondonga obviously left something to be desired, because early in 1939 the missionaries decided that there would be no divine services in Oshitayi for at least a month, a highly unusual "anathema" (as Walde Kivinen called it) that was caused by the men's continual unruly behaviour in services.[140]

From the 1930s onwards, and more clearly after the Second World War, the missionaries had a new explanation for the lowering standard of Christianity in Ovamboland, i.e. the emergence of neo-paganism. Unlike the situation at the beginning of the century, when the Christians had not yet been totally able to break away from heathen customs, a growing number, especially of young Christians, were now said to be beginning to admire the old heathenism and to question Christian teachings. The missionaries considered this an act of open defiance which led to the unacceptable pursuit of syncretism, or in the case of many young men, to mockery of Christian rites and truths. Neo-paganism was regarded to be a real threat to Christianity, particularly because it was assumed to be a Pan-African phenomenon which had come to Ovamboland with the migrant labourers.[141]

The Ovambo Christians were naturally not a monolithic group; there were differences in their standards of Christianity. Apart from the difference between the eastern and western communities, there were also differences among the members of individual congregations. Quite often the missionaries described their parishes

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to K.A. Paasio 16 Jan. 1935, Eac36; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus tarkastusmatkasta länsiheimoihin 15.–27.6.26 (Ongandjera and Ombalantu parish inspections), Hha9; Saari, Heikki, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksesta Ombalantussa, Uukualuuzissa ja Uukolonkazissa 1935 (parish inspections), Hha13; V. Alho's Annual Report 1937 (Onayena), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1938, Appendix 1, Hha16; V. Alho's Annual Report 1940 (Onayena/Ontananga/Olukonda) & H. Saari's Annual Report 1940 (Oshigambo/Oshitayi) & S. Aarni's Annual Report 1940 (Ongandjera), mmm 22–23 Jan. 1941, Appendices 2, 18 and 34, Hha19; Himanen, Kalle, Kertomus lähetystyöstä Ombalantussa ja Okalongossa 1935–46, Hha21; K. Himanen's Annual Report 1947 (Ongandjera/Uukwaluudhi/Uukolonkadhi), mmm 8–9 Jan. 1948, unnumbered appendix, Hha21; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista Ambomaalla 1939 (report on parish inspections 1939, general part and Ombalantu inspection), Hhb2. All in AFMS, NAF.

139 S. Rainio to M. Tarkkanen 3 Feb. 1930, Eac30, AFMS, NAF.

140 V. Kivinen to U. Paunu 18 Feb. 1939, Eac39, AFMS, NAF.

141 See V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 8 June 1931, Eac30; T. Vapaavuori to the Board of Directors of the FMS 9 Jan. 1937 and 2 July 1946, Eac38,41; A.W. Björklund to U. Paunu 30 Dec. 1945, Eac41; W. Kivinen's Annual Report 1935 (general report), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 1, Hha14; General report on Ovambo mission 1941, mmm 21–22 Jan. 1942, Appendix 1, Hha19; H. Saari's Annual Reports 1943–1946 (Oshigambo–Oshitayi), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1944 appendix 14 & mmm 17–18 Jan. 1945 unnumbered appendix & mmm 9–10 Jan. 1946 appendix 14 & mmm 22–23 Jan. 1947 appendix 13, Hha20-21; V. Alho's Annual Report 1945 (general report), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1946, Appendix 1, Hha20; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1954 (Uukwanyama), mmm 19–20 Jan. 1955, Appendix 37a, Hha26; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1957 (Uukwanyama), mmm 14–17 Jan. 1958, Appendix 11, Hha29. All in AFMS, NAF. Copy V. Alho to T. Vapaavuori 10 Dec. 1946 (A glance at the situation in Olukonda, Ontananga and Onayena parishes 1938–1946), Daac, AELCIN; Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan.... tarkastuksista 1946, p. 4, Daac, AELCIN; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani.... 20.6.–20.12.1954, p. 63–65, 93, Dga, AELCIN.

by stating that the majority of the parishioners were very poor Christians but there was also a small group of truly devoted people whose conduct they were quite happy with.[142]

Another division which the missionaries noted in standards of Christianity was that between genders. At the beginning of the century it was the women who were seen as the problem. Some missionaries, in accordance with Pauline misogyny, regarded them as the weaker vessels. Their knowledge of Christian truths was weaker than the men's and they had been less able to break away from heathen customs or from the influence of their heathen surroundings. These weakly Christianized women were therefore sometimes regarded as a threat to further Christianization because they might, as it was said, drag their husbands back to heathenism.[143] Later the tone was different, and in the late 1950s the missionaries were moved to state that "the [Ovambo] church is in danger of becoming a women's church" and "we have lost the younger men".[144] Indeed, from the 1930s on, but particularly after World War II, many nominally Christian men seem to have distanced themselves from "devotional" Christianity in many ways. Their knowledge of Christian dogma was becoming increasingly poor because they often left school early to go to work in the Police Zone as soon as they could, and their behaviour became more "undisciplined" and "unchristian", so that a growing number of them did not bother to participate in Christian rites or divine services even nominally.[145] As a consequence of this trend, the proportion of women among the parish elders in-

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142 E.g. E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 17 Nov. 1920, Eac22; V. Alho to Ovamboland church administration 24 April 1935, Eac36; A. Glad to K.A. Paasio 3 Jan. 1935, Eac36; W. Björklund to U. Paunu 15 Dec. 1938, Eac38; K. Petäjä's Annual Report 1921 (Oshigambo), mmm 11 Jan. 1922, Appendix 12, Hha8; A. Hänninen's Annual Report 1922 (Engela), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1923, Appendix 20, Hha8; K. Petäjä's Annual Report 1928 (Engela), mmm 21 Jan. 1929, unnumbered appendix, Hha10; W. Björklund's Annual Report 1930 (Onayena), mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 13, Hha11; T. Vapaavuori's Annual Report 1932 (Ombalantu), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendix 28, Hha12; S. Kyllönen's Annual Report 1954 (schools), mmm 19–20 Jan. 1955, Appendix 3, Hha26. All in AFMS, NAF.

143 E.g. K. Petäjä to M. Tarkkanen 31 Dec. 1917, Eac20; E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 19 Aug. 1919, Eac21; A. Rautaheimo to M. Tarkkanen 7 Feb. 1923, Eac23; A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 15 March 1924, Eac24; W. Kivinen to M. Tarkkanen 12 Feb.1927, Eac27; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1927 (Elim), mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendix 32, Hha10; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista 20.–31.8.1927 (Ombalantu parish inspection), Hha9; H. Saari's Annual Report 1940 (Oshigambo/ Oshitayi), mmm 22–23 Jan. 1941, Appendix 18, Hha19. All in AFMS, NAF. Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan... tarkastuksista 1946, p. 12, 26, Daac, AELCIN.

144 E.J. Pentti to O. Vuorela 13 Feb. 1956, Eac47; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1957 (Uukwanyama), mmm 14–17 Jan. 1958, Appendix 11, Hha29. Both in AFMS, NAF.

145 E.g. H. Ranttila's Annual Report 1932 (Oshitayi), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendix 13, Hha12; H. Saari's Annual Report 1940 (Oshigambo/Oshitayi), mmm 22–23 Jan. 1940, Appendix 18, Hha19; V. Alho's Annual Report 1945 (general report), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1946, Appendix 1, Hha20; L. Lindström's Annual Report 1949 (schools), mmm 25–26 Jan. 1950, Appendix 2, Hha22; E. Hynönen's Annual Reports 1953 and 1954 (Uukwanyama), mmm 12–15 Jan. 1954 and 19–20 Jan.1955, Appendices 24 and 37a, Hha25–26; B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1955 (general report) & S. Kyllönen's Annual Report 1955 (schools) & E.J. Pentti's Annual Report 1955 (Western parishes) & J. Marttunen's Annual Report 1955 (Uukwanyama), mmm 10–12 Jan. 1956, Appendices 1, 3, 9 and 10, Hha27; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1956 (Uukwanyama), mmm 9–12 Jan. 1957, Appendix 10, Hha28. All in AFMS, NAF. Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani....1954, p. 64–65, 81–82 and Appendix 33 p. 218, 220–221, Dga, AELCIN.

creased in the 1950s because many parishes did not have enough men who met the moral standards required for such a position.[146] But although men in general were now considered weaker Christians than women, there was still a group of men whom the missionaries regarded as the rabble of the Christian community, i.e. those who had converted while they had been on labour contracts in the Police Zone. Their baptismal education, by Rhenish missionaries, was regarded as having been grossly inadequate, and they could usually neither read nor understand anything about the basic principles of the Christian faith. Many of these converts were obviously not very devoted Christians, and quite a number returned to their original religion soon after baptism.[147] For example, when the missionary Lehto asked Onayena teachers in 1920 to estimate the standard of Christianity among those parishioners who had converted in the Police Zone, some 40 per cent were deemed "decent", 30 per cent were hovering between Christianity and heathenism and the remaining 30 per cent had returned to heathenism. Sixteen years later the situation was not better: out of 21 returning labourers who brought their baptism certificates to Vapaavuori only four really joined the Onayena congregation, as six had "slid back to heathenism" by the end of the year, and the rest had either returned to the south or had to be excommunicated.[148]

The gender aspect of standards of Christianity, although its manifestations in missionary documents are based on the missionaries' Euro-religocentric views, is quite interesting and might give much food for speculation. We will concentrate here on just a few points, however. We recall from the previous chapter that the majority of early converts were (young) men, and that the proportion of women began to correspond to their proportion in the population rather late. Thus, because of the structure and beliefs of the original Ovambo society, it was evidently easier for men to change their religious affiliation than for women. Later, however, quite a few men realized that Christianity did not offer them what they wanted, or was not the best way of obtaining it (whatever it was), and they dropped out, again because it was acceptable for men to change affiliations. The women, on the other hand, were slow staters in the process of conversion, but once they had become Christian they remained more loyal to their new faith, apparently feeling that membership of the Christian community gave them something which the original social system denied them. What that something was (job opportunities outside wifehood, a feeling of higher social status, a feeling of more freedom of action, or something else) I cannot venture to say, because the sources give too little information for analysis.

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146 E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1957 (Uukwanyama), mmm 14–17 Jan. 1958, Appendix 11, Hha29, AFMS, NAF.

147 E.g. V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen December 1920, Eac22; E. Hynönen to U. Paunu 17 Aug. 1936, Eac37; T. Vapaavuori to U. Paunu 28 Sept. 1936, Eac37; T. Vapaavuori to the Board of Directors of the FMS 9 Jan. 1937, Eac38; W. Kivinen's Annual Report 1936 (general report) & E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1936 (Elim), mmm 13-14 Jan. 1937, Appendices 1 and 16, Hha15. All in AFMS, NAF. Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani.... 1954, p. 64–65, 91–93, Dga, AELCIN.

148 E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 17 Nov. 1920, Eac22 and T. Vapaavuori to the Board of Directors of the FMS 9 Jan. 1937, Eac38, AFMS, NAF.

The missionaries' abundant complaints about their parishioners' standards of Christianity show that they had different opinions from the Ovambo Christians of the meaning of conversion and "being a Christian". The missionaries were rigorous in their outlook and expected the converts not only to identify themselves with the new religion, but also to adopt its dogmas and modes of behaviour (as defined by the missionaries themselves) in their entirety. But Ovambo Christians, or great many of them at least, were more flexible. They adopted Christianity only to the extent that suited their needs, and rejected the rest of the missionaries' package. They were happy to live in two worlds, the indigenous one and the "Christian" one.[149] Therefore Ovambo conversion during the period considered here was not a conversion in the strictest sense of the word, because in many cases there was no change of conviction. Instead, their conversion fits into Noak's category of adhesion, or if we wish to refer to Fisher's theory, Ovambo Christianity was at the stage of mixing.

Explaining the waves of conversion

Beginnings of the mass conversions in the 1920s

One standard explanation proposed for the mass conversions to Christianity in Ovamboland in the early 1920s makes mention of the devastating famine of 1915–1916, which, as the missionaries still interpreted it well after the event, humbled the proud people and opened their hearts to the Word of God.[150] This is also the explanation which Peltola gives in his "History of the FMS work in Africa".[151] Some more scholarly writers have also hinted that a direct link may exist between famines and conversions in Ovamboland,[152] but as far as I know, nobody has tried

149 Cf. McKittrick, 2002, p. 210–213.

150 Copy "Some remarks to the report 1937 of the Government of SWA in regard to the mission work in Ovamboland by the central committee Finnish Mission Ovamboland, April 1939", p. 6, Eaj, AELCIN; Mmm 31 Aug. 1937 §26 and Appendix 11a, Hha15, AFMS, NAF; Minutes of the field administration board 15 Feb. 1939 §5 Appendix 1, Hha17, AFMS, NAF; Tarkkanen, Matti, Die Finnische Mission in Amboland SW-Afrika (manuscript), sine datum (but probably late 1920s), p. 3, Hhb3, AFMS, NAF. ** The reliability of the missionaries' view of the famine as a cause of conversions can be questioned, because famines seem to have been a standard explanation ever since the missionaries noticed that the number of pupils in their schools had increased after the 1878/1879 famine. After that they tended to state repeatedly that people are bound to be drawn to the Word because of famines or other hardships. (See e.g. Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 28, Lb, AELCIN; M. Rautanen to J. Mustakallio 25 Feb. 1909, Eac2; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 9 Dec. 1930 & S. Rainio to M. Tarkkanen 25 July 1930, Eac30; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 16 Jan. 1932, Eac31; A. Savola's and A. Glad's Annual Reports 1897, mmm 5 Jan. 1898, Appendices 1 and 4, Hha2; K. Petäjä's Annual Report 1911 (Ongandjera), mmm 18 Jan. 1912, Appendix 8, Hha6; N. Wäänänen's Annual Report 1912 (Elim/Oshigambo), mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendix 4, Hha6. All in AFMS, NAF; *Suomen Lähetyssanomia* no. 6, 1909, p. 116; Rautanen, 1902, p. 6; Savola, 1924, p. 196, 201–202; Peltola, 1958, p. 64–65, 82, 95 Lehtonen, 1999, p. 20. See also Nambala's view in Nambala, 1990, p. 213–214.)

151 Peltola, 1958, p. 207.

152 Gordon, 1978, p. 285; Silvester & Wallace & Hayes, 1998, p. 42; Siiskonen, 1998, p. 220; McKittrick, 2002, p.151.

to use the famine as an indirect explanation, claiming that it caused something which in turn acted as the cause of conversion. It is obviously wise not to play with such cause-effect-cause linkages in the case of the great famine, because the argument might remain very hypothetical, and consequently we will concentrate in the following on assessing whether a more or less direct link existed between the 1915–1916 famine and the beginning of the mass conversions in the 1920s.

If it is assumed that a shock of some kind (psychological, social or economic) can serve as a precondition for mass conversion, then the famine would appear to be a very good explanation, because it obviously was a shock. This famine still stands out in late twentieth-century oral narratives as an exceptional event because of the massive deaths it caused,[153] but also the resulting social disintegration was devastating. The famine forced thousands of people to flee to Hereroland in search for food,[154] while back home most conventional social norms were abandoned in the fight for survival, "Everywhere around us societies are disintegrating as violence, robbery and the loosening of morals prevail"[155]. The break down of social order was so total that for many the famine represented the culmination of the social disintegration which had begun with the emergence of a raiding economy in the 19th century.[156] Thus it was a great shock, in the aftermath of which, according to Viktor Alho's later recollection, the number of heathen pupils at the mission schools began to increase.[157] But although there is some vague empirical evidence as well as logical arguments to support the claim that the great famine was the cause of the first wave of conversions, I do not believe that it can have been the direct cause. There are, as I have already tentatively suggested earlier,[158] several facts which run contrary to such an interpretation.

Firstly, if famines *per se* are adequate explanations for conversion, then why did the famine of 1908/1909 not result in increased conversions? It is true that this famine was less devastating than the later one, but it still was by far the most severe famine to occur in Ovamboland since the missionaries had arrived in the country in 1870,[159] and it also caused considerable social disintegration.[160] Yet it did not cause any statistically significant upswing in conversions in Ondonga, although the number of converts in 1912–1914 was somewhat higher than during the first decade of the twentieth century.[161]

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153 Kreike, 1996, p. 80.

154 McKittrick, 2002, p. 147; Gewald, 2003, p. 223–231.

155 K. Björklund to M. Tarkkanen 3 Jan. 1916, Eac20, AFMS, NAF. For other comments about the chaos, violence and social disintegration, see E. Liljeblad's Annual Report 1915 (Oniipa) & K.J. Petäjä's Annual Report 1915 (Ongandjera) & V. Alho's Annual Report 1915 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 22 March 1916, Appendices 3, 15 and 17, Hha7, AFMS, NAF; Koivu, 1925, p. 111. See also McKittrick, 2002, p. 146–147.

156 McKittrick, 1995, p. 77.

157 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 16 Jan. 1932, Eac31, AFMS, NAF. (I cannot comment on the reliability of Alho's recollections, because there are no comprehensive school statistics for the period in question.)

158 Miettinen, 1999, p. 11.

159 M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1908 (Olukonda), mmm 20 Jan. 1909, Appendix 1, Hha5, AFMS, NAF; Strassegger, 1988, p. 77–78.

160 McKittrick, 2002, p. 138.

161 Tilastotaulut Suomen Lähetysseuran työstä lähetysalueellaan Ambomaalla 1900–1915. Appendices in the minutes of missionaries' meetings, Hha4–7, AFMS, NAF.

Secondly, the span between the alleged cause and effect is rather long (four to seven years, i.e. from 1916 to 1920 or from 1915 to 1922) if the famine is to explain the conversions. At this point it would be nice to have exact information on how long baptismal education normally took, i.e. what was the normal interval between the moment when a person manifested his willingness to become a Christian by attending elementary school and the moment when he was baptised.[162] Alas, no exact information is available, but something can still be said about the situation in the 1910s. In some cases baptismal education could take years, because missionaries' reports have a couple of references to individuals who had spent up to seven or eight years at school before they were regarded as ready for baptism.[163] These were clearly exceptional cases, however, and at the other end of the scale there was a boy who was baptised after only one year of education[164]. The normal time was somewhere between these extremes, probably closer to the minimum than the maximum because there are a few pieces of information to indicate that it was common for converts to be baptised after two or three years of schooling.[165] Baptismal education may have been slightly shorter in the early 1920s than before, however, because some missionaries temporarily had to sacrifice some of their earlier thoroughness in this respect in order to be able to cope with the great number of people who wished to convert.[166] Furthermore, if the famine was the shock which made some people yearn for Christianity, they would probably have tried to obtain the required knowledge for baptism as soon as possible, and would not have spent years in school. Thus, all in all, thinking of the time-span factor, famine is still a possible but unlikely explanation for the wave of conversions in the 1920s.

Further evidence against the famine explanation can be found in the missionaries' own writings. They obviously saw the famine as a heaven-sent opportunity to promote Christianity, and therefore presumably preached that it was a punishment sent by God,[167] in the hope that it would make the heathen more receptive to His

162 The pre-baptismal education was divided into two parts. The final touch was given at a baptismal school, which, according to the church rules of 1924, lasted at least six months. Before a person could become a catechumen he not only had to prove that he was sincerely willing "to leave heathenism", but also had to be able to read satisfactorily and to know the elementary truths of Christianity (i.e. main points of Luther's smaller catechism). These skills were acquired at the elementary schools. Only old, blind, "feeble-minded" or dying people could be baptized while illiterate. The practice of baptismal education in the 1910s seems to have conformed to these rules, even though there were apparently no formal rules concerning the requirements for baptism before 1924. (See Ambomaan evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon järjestyssäännöt 1924 §18–20, Hhc2 & Mmm 14 Sept. – 6 Oct 1925 §4, Hha9, AFMS, NAF; Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 12–13, Lb, AELCIN.)

163 Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus ... 1911–1912, p. 14, Lb, AELCIN; J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 4 Jan. 1909, Eac13, AFMS, NAF.

164 K. Koivu's Annual Report 1912 (Elim), mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendix 14, Hha6, AFMS, NAF.

165 O. Tylväs to J. Mustakallio 2 Feb. 1911, Eac16; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 3 Feb. 1920, Eac22; A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 27 Nov. 1923, Eac23; J. Hopeasalmi to M. Tarkkanen 16 March 1933, Eac31. All in AFMS, NAF.

166 A. Hänninen to M. Tarkkanen 31 Oct. 1920 and E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 17 Nov. 1920, Eac22, AFMS, NAF.

167 The only contemporary reference to preaching about the famine as a punishment sent by God is to be found in Viktor Alho's annual report of 1916, but I assume that other missionaries also referred to this, because hardships as expressions of God's wrath seem to have been a standard

Word. This did not happen. Instead, the famine clearly worked against Christianization in the short term, because people had to concentrate on staying alive and therefore had no possibility to attend schools or church services.[168] Also the long-term effect was not what the missionaries had hoped for, on the contrary. Although there were some positive signs such as the increased heathen attendance at divine services in Oshigambo[169], the missionaries' general mood after the famine was one of disappointment. The heathen were said to be just as indifferent as before, or even more firmly committed to heathenism and hostile to Christianity than ever.[170]

It is actually not surprising that the great famine did not seem to have any positive effect on Christianization, because theoretically famines can be assumed to promote Christianity in two cases[171]: 1) if missionaries are able to help the victims of famine to survive, which would show non-Christians that they are caring people whose message might be worth following[172], or alternatively, that the missionaries have abundant material resources which one might be able to share by liaising with them, or 2) if the famine kills only non-Christians, because that would show that the Christians' god is mighty enough to save his people while at the same time punishing non-Christians for not obeying the missionaries' call to follow him. Neither of these conditions existed in Ovamboland during the famine of 1915/1916.

The hunger in 1915/1916 was so massive that the missionaries could do very little to help the starving. They tried at first to distribute something from their own stocks, but towards the end of 1915 they, too, were running out of food. They then decided that the most important thing was to keep themselves alive and, if possible, to feed their African foster children and servants. In some cases hunger

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part of the missionaries' repertoire. They used it to explain the hardships of the late 19th century and the famine of the early 1930s, and even in the 1940s it was still being claimed that famines were God's way of teaching people to obey his word. (See V. Alho's Annual Report 1916 [Uukwaluudhi], mmm 17 Jan. 1917, Appendix 33, Hha7; W. Björklund's Annual Report 1929 [Onayena], mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 15, Hha11; O. Aho's Annual Report 1930 [Elim], mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 28, Hha11; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 22 March and 20 April 1929, Eac29. All in AFMS, NAF. Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan... tarkastuksista 1946, p. 21, 25–26, Daac, AELCIN; Varis, 1988, p. 172–173; Laurmaa [Lehto], Erkki, Afrika jUuningininomutenja, 1947, p. 95–96 English translation in Nambala, 1990, p. 213.)

168 E.g. M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1915 (general report and Olukonda) & K. Björklund's Annual Report 1915 (Olukonda/Ondangwa) & E. Liljeblad's Annual Report 1915 (Oniipa) & J. Wehanen's Annual Report 1915 (Ontananga) & E. Lehto's Annual Report 1915 (Onayena) & H. Kupila's Annual Report (Oshigambo) & N. Wäänänen's Annual Report 1915 (Ongandjera) & K. Koivu's Annual Report 1915 (Elim) & V. Alho's Annual Report 1915 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 22 March 1916, Appendices 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, Hha7, AFMS, NAF.

169 K. J. Petäjä's Annual Report 1916 (Oshigambo), mmm 17 Jan. 1917, Appendix 26, Hha7, AFMS, NAF.

170 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 16 Aug. 1916, Eac20; M. Kantele to M. Tarkkanen 15 Nov. 1916, Eac20; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 11 March 1916, Eac20; K. Petäjä to M. Tarkkanen 27 March 1916, Eac20; K. Björklund's Annual Report 1916 (Olukonda/Ondangwa) & V. Alho's Annual Report 1916 (Uukwaluudhi) , mmm 17 Jan. 1917, Appendices 3 and 33, Hha7; K. Koivu's Annual Report 1917 (Elim), mmm 15 Jan. 1918, Appendix 20, Hha7; Alho, Viktor, Mitä voidaan tehdä pakanain saavuttamiseksi, mmm 31 Aug. 1937, Appendix 12.2, Hha15. All in AFMS, NAF.

171 There may actually be other cases, but these two come readily to mind.

172 Cf. The view of the missionary Savola, in Savola, 1924, p. 196.

refugees had to be chased away from the mission stations.[173] When the South Africans were able to send some famine relief grain to Ovamboland at the end of 1915, it was distributed by the missionaries, who, apparently in accordance with the South Africans' orders, sold part of it to the needy, although there were few people who could afford it.[174] All this, the inability to help, chasing away the needy and selling relief rations, probably led the non-Christians to regard the missionaries as people who did not care about the sufferings of others. This is what happened during the famine of the early 1930s in Uukwambi, where the missionary Aho had a supply of relief grain provided by the FMS which he refused to distribute free of charge.[175]

The missionaries were even unable to prevent Christians from dying of hunger: Thus the recorded mortality among Christians was 4.9 percent in 1915 and over 9 percent in 1916, whereas during the first years of the twentieth century it had varied between 1.5 per cent in 1910 and 3.5 per cent in 1905.[176] Actual mortality was probably higher, in fact, because after the famine the missionaries sometimes had difficulties in finding out which of the missing members of their congregations were still alive and which had died.[177] If the missionaries in this situation preached that the famine was God's punishment for not converting, as I suspect they did, they were obviously making a great mistake and underestimating the intellectual capacity of the Africans, for the people cannot have failed to notice the contradiction between their preaching and the fact that Christians were also dying of hunger. At least some of the Kwaluudhi noticed this, and Viktor Alho, who had

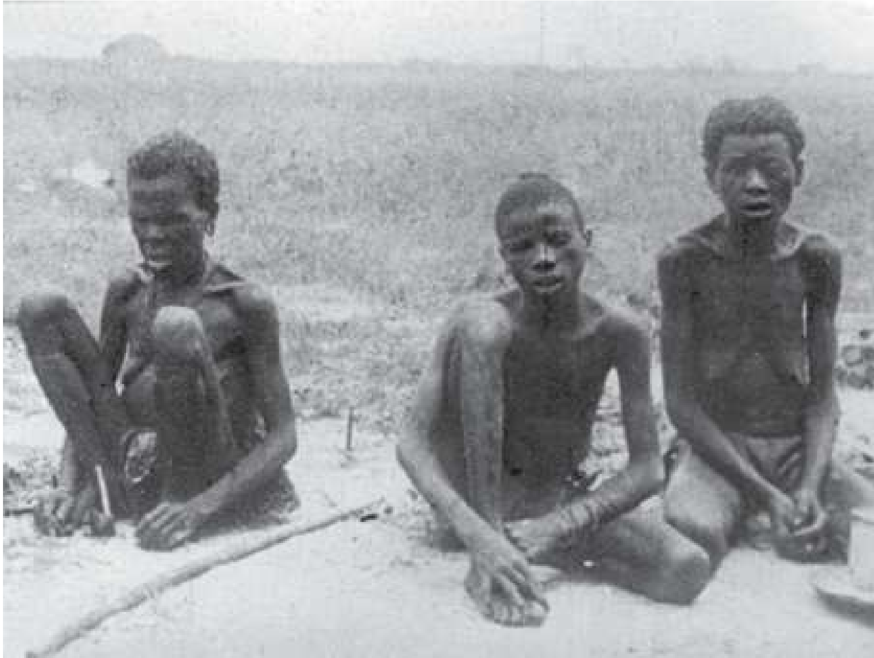
173 See M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1915 (general report and Olukonda) & S. Rainio's Annual Report 1915 (Onandjokwe hospital) & J. Wehanen's Annual Report 1915 (Ontananga) & E. Lehto's Annual Report 1915 (Onayena) & N. Wäänänen's Annual Report 1915 (Okahao) & K. Koivu's Annual Report 1915 (Elim) & V. Alho's Annual Report 1915 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 22 March 1916, Appendices 1, 5, 8, 10, 14, 16, 17, Hha7; A. Glad's Annual Report 1916 (Oshigambo), mmm 17 Jan. 1917, Appendix 26, Hha7. All in AFMS, NAF; Rautanen, Martti, Ein kurzer Überblick über die Hungersnot in Amboland (26.12.1915), p. 2–3, IV (vol. 11) Reports on Ovamboland Famine, RCO, NAN; Koivu, 1925, p. 109–111.

174 E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen Nov. 1916, Eac20; M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1915 (general report and Olukonda) & K. Koivu's Annual Report 1915 (Elim), mmm 22 March 1916, Appendices 1 and 16, Hha7, AFMS, NAF. (Although the South Africans expected the Ovambo to pay for relief grain, some of it was apparently distributed free of charge to the poorest people after Martti Rautanen had asked the South Africans for permission to do this. See M. Rautanen to Major Manning 27 Dec. 1915 & draft(?) Captain Pearson to M. Rautanen [sine datum], IV (vol. 11), Reports on Ovamboland Famine, RCO, NAN; Hayes, 1992, p. 203–204.)

175 O. Aho's Annual Report 1930 (Elim), mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 28, Hha11, AFMS, NAF.

176 Tilastotaulut Suomen Lähetysseuran työstä lähetysalueellaan Ambomaalla 1900–1916. Appendices in the minutes of missionaries' meetings, Hha4–7, AFMS, NAF. (The figure for 1916 is not exact because figures for Oshigambo parish are missing.) On Christians dying of hunger or of diseases caused by hunger, see also e.g. K. Petäjä to M. Tarkkanen 27 March 1916, Eac20; K. Björklund's Annual Report 1915 (Olukonda /Ondangwa) & E. Liljeblad's Annual Report 1915 (Oniipa), mmm 22 March 1916, Appendices 2 and 3, Hha7; E. Lehto's Annual Report 1916 (Onayena) & N. Wäänänen's Annual Report 1916 (Okahao), mmm 17 Jan. 1917, Appendices 22 and 30, Hha7; K. Björklund's Annual Report 1917 (Ondangwa/Olukonda), mmm 15 Jan. 1918, Appendix 18, Hha7. All in AFMS, NAF.

177 R. Rautanen's Annual Report 1917 (Ondangwa) & K. Björklund's Annual Report 1917 (Ondangwa–Olukonda), mmm 15 Jan. 1918, Appendices 1c and 18, Hha7; A. Järvinen's Annual Report 1920 (Ondangwa–Onandjokwe), mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 7, Hha8. All in AFMS, NAF.



Beggars at a mission station during the "famine that swept the country" in 1915/16. This famine not only killed thousands of people but also caused devastating social disintegration. Contrary to what has sometimes been claimed, however, it was not the cause of the beginning of mass conversions, partly because the devastation was so massive that the missionaries could do practically nothing to help the victims. (Photo by courtesy of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission)

preached this way, was obliged to report afterwards that non-Christians were not interested in the Word because they had seen that the Christians' god had not even saved them from dying. In fact, some people claimed that christianization had been the actual cause of the famine.[178]

If it was not the great famine, then what was it that launched the first wave of conversions? Here I would like to refer to another explanation which the missionaries gave in the 1930s: the emergence of colonial rule.[179] It was not the coming of the South Africans in 1915 that achieved this, because the event was not significant from the Ovambo point of view, as colonial rule was so weak during the first couple of years that it did not necessarily have any effect on ordinary people's lives,

178 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 16 Aug. 1916, Eac20 and V. Alho's Annual Report 1916 (Tsandi), mmm 17 Jan. 1917, Appendix 33, Hha7, AFMS, NAF.

179 Some remarks to the report 1937 of the Government of SWA in regard to the mission work in Ovamboland by Central Committee Finnish Mission Ovamboland, April 1939, p. 5, Eaj, AELCIN; Mmm 31 Aug. 1937 §26, Appendices 11 and 11a, Hha15, AFMS, NAF. The emergence of colonial rule as the main reason for Ovambo conversions has also been referred to in couple of scholarly works, albeit in both cases the finding is vaguely documented. (See Houghton, 1965, p. 43 and Borkowsky, 1975, p. 7.)

while the kings' could ignore the orders given by colonial officials, as Mandume indeed did.[180] Neither would the emergence of colonialism in 1915 as an explanation for the conversions relieve us of the time-span problems. Nevertheless, it was basically the coming of colonial rule which launched the first conversion wave, or more particularly it was the South Africans' war against King Mandume of Uukwanyama and the kings' subsequent death in February 1917. The fall of Mandume was a shock that apparently greatly undermined the Ovambo world view, because it showed that they were now ruled by foreigners who had the military means to cause havoc among the population if they so wished.[181] It was a shock which soon reached every Ovambo community and made people fear the European administration.[182] This can be deduced from various pieces of information. For example, when Major Manning visited Ombalantu in March 1917 he summoned a tribal meeting and asked, among other things, whether there was an heir to the defunct throne in the community. There was, but people lied that there was not because they feared that Manning had come to kill the heir, just as the South Africans had just killed Mandume.[183] Around the same time King Iipumbu of Uukwambi was also said to have been afraid that the South Africans would soon send troops against him, too.[184] The effects of the shock were also felt at the Onandjokwe hospital where some soldiers from the expeditionary force were being treated. According to Dr. Rainio, the war against Mandume (and apparently also the presence of soldiers at the hospital) had scared people so much that they did not dare to come to the hospital, and therefore far fewer African patients were treated in 1917 than previously. Some Kwanyama who had been wounded in the battle against the South Africans did not venture to come to the hospital until a year afterwards. Rainio also noted in late 1917 that the Africans in general had become "cautious and reserved".[185] But it was not only the Ovambo who were shocked by the colonial show of force; the missionaries were as well. In their first meeting after Mandume's fall many missionaries expressed gloomy thoughts about

180 See Hayes, 1992, p. 208–211, 214–215, 219–220; McKittrick, 1995, p. 81–82, 86; Kreike, 1996, p. 101–104.

181 Cf. McKittrick, 2002, p. 155.

182 See Houghton, 1965, p. 25; Hayes, 1992, p. 238; McKittrick, 1995, p. 88 fn 22; McKittrick, 2002, p. 153, 155. (The South Africans seem to have been keen to make themselves feared after Mandume's fall. When Colonel de Jager, commander of the SWA expeditionary force, had a meeting with the Kwanyama elenga after Mandume's death, he warned that any further disobedience on their part would lead to a new, devastating war. He also tried to scare the elenga to obedience by claiming that Whites had supernatural powers for punish disobedience. Any man who opposed colonial authorities and was not brought to them to be punished, he claimed, would "get sick, he will fall down in the weld and the vultures will come and pick his eyes and his bones and he will rot there". See Verbatim report of the meeting held at the Government Residency Namakunde on the 14th of February 1917, between Colonel de Jager ... and various headmen of Ovakuanyama Tribe, 2/3, A450, NAN.)

183 Hayes, 1992, p. 248; McKittrick, 1995, p. 110; McKittrick, 2002, p. 158.

184 S. and A. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 10 July and 15 Dec. 1918, Eac21, AFMS, NAF; Confidential notes regarding European and Native Inhabitants in Ovamboland 12 Feb. 1918, 2/10, A450, NAN.

185 S. Rainio to M. Tarkkanen 12 Aug. 1917, Eac20; S. Rainio's Annual Report 1917 (Onandjokwe hospital), mmm 15 Jan. 1918, Appendix 22, Hha7; Rainio, Selma, Lääkäri- ja sairaanhoitotoiminnasta Ovambomaalla [About medical work in Ovamboland], s.d. (probably 1919), p. 13, Hhb2. All in AFMS, NAF.

the future of the Ovambo under the new colonial rule. Martti Rautanen, in particular, was pessimistic and spoke about "the present time when death and destruction under colonial supremacy is awaiting the Ovambo people."[186]

If we still assume that shocks give an impetus to mass conversions, and I do not see any reason why we should not, then the shock caused by Mandume's fall is obviously a better explanation than the one involving the great famine. The famine was nothing new. Famines were recurrent and could be explained within the context of the "traditional cosmology", but the blatant use of military force by a technologically superior foreign group was something unprecedented, at least outside the Portuguese-controlled part of Ovamboland.

The evidence which links the conversions of the early 1920s to the shock caused by Mandume's fall is primarily of a temporal and local nature. The missionaries reported back home in 1917 that there was a new interest in Christianity among the heathen in Ondonga; the doors were now open to the Word, as they said. A similar, although less marked change also took place in the western communities, where the doors were now opening.[187] The most remarkable increase in interest in Christianity was nevertheless discovered in Uukwanyama.[188] After Liljeblad had toured the community late in 1918, i.e. two years after the South Africans had deported the last Rhenish missionary, he reported enthusiastically how very keen people there were to be baptised. He was also surprised how well many heathens had been able to learn about Christian doctrines. Two years later Alho toured the community and also made a note of the people's great enthusiasm for becoming Christians. He reported that they were almost fighting to be baptised, and that many of those whom he regarded as not yet eligible for baptism came back over and over again begging to be baptised. One girl who had been at the school since 1917 was particularly persistent and finally made Alho baptise her. It was also the case at the Onandjokwe hospital, according to the nurse Karin Hirn, that the non-Christian patients from Uukwanyama were more receptive to the Word than patients from other communities.[189]

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186 Mmm 20 Aug. 1917 §1, Hha7, AFMS, NAF. See also M. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 3 Sept. 1917, Eac2, AFMS, NAF.

187 M. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 21 March 1917 and 16 Oct. 1917, Eac2; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 25 Sept. 1917, Eac20; A. Packalen to M. Tarkkanen 3 March 1917, Eac20; K. Petäjä to M. Tarkkanen 15 April 1917 and 31 Dec. 1917, eac20; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 12 Dec. 1917, Eac20. All in AFMS, NAF.

188 The Kwanyama's rush to Christianity at this time was actually so obvious that stories about the "Uukwanyama awakening" became a standard part of later missionary propaganda (see e.g. *Suomalaista raivaustyötä Afrikan erämaassa*, 1945, p. 42–45; *Ambomaa*, 1959, p.93–99).

189 E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 13 Nov. 1918, Eac21; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 3 Feb. 1920, Eac22; E. Liljeblad's Annual Report 1918 (Oniipa and Uukwanyama) & K. Hirn's Annual Report 1918, mmm 24 Feb. 1919, Appendices 6 and 10, Hha7. All in AFMS, NAF. ** For other references regarding enthusiasm for Christianity among the Kwanyama, see: E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 31 Dec. 1919, Eac21; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 7 June 1920, Eac22; K. Petäjä to M. Tarkkanen 26 May 1920 and to H. Haahti 23 June 1920, Eac22; A. Hänninen to M. Tarkkanen 13 June 1921, Eac22; K. Petäjä to M. Tarkkanen 23 Nov. 1922, Eac23; E. Liljeblad's Annual Report 1919 (Oniipa and Uukwanyama), mmm 13 Jan. 1920, unnumbered appendix, Hha8; K. Petäjä's Annual Report 1922 (general report), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1923, Appendix 1, Hha8; Hänninen, August, Mitä parannuksia on tehtävä..., mmm 14 Sept. – 6 Oct. 1925 §4 appendix 2, Hha9. All in AFMS, NAF.

It hardly is a coincidence that the missionaries began reporting an increased interest in Christianity soon after Mandume's fall, neither can it be a coincidence that members of that very community which had been most directly hit by the colonial show of force, first by the Portuguese and then by the South Africans, were also the keenest to be baptised. The increase in interest in Christianity in Uukwanyama after 1917 can also be shown statistically, for where the Rhenish Mission Society, which worked in Uukwanyama from 1891 to 1916, had some 500 Christians in its congregations in 1909 and some 600 in 1915,[190] the Finns baptised no less than 1,490 Kwanyama within four years soon afterwards (1919–1922).[191]

The emergence of colonial rule could be used as an indirect explanation for the Kwanyama conversions, i.e. it could be claimed that it was not the actual cause but simply something which made conversions possible. The person of King Mandume is central to any such explanation. It has been claimed that he had a grudge against Christians and therefore allowed them to be persecuted. This would have made the Kwanyama Christian community feel very insecure,[192] and it would obviously have been unwise to convert in such circumstances even if one had wanted to. Only when the "tyrant" had been removed from power by the colonial forces could people feel safe to fulfil their long-standing aspirations of becoming Christians.[193] There are a couple of points which make such an explanation rather questionable, however. Firstly, practically everything that is known about Mandume's attitude towards Christians is based on missionaries' writings, and in a good many cases on mission propaganda.[194] Only recently, with the first efforts to collect oral evidence and history, has another view emerged which questions the image of Mandume as an oppressive and barbarous ruler.[195] Any explanation of the Uukwanyama conversions which is basically based only on a propagandist image of Mandume should therefore be treated with suspicion. Secondly, even though the above line of thought might explain the Kwanyama conversions, it still would fail to explain why they also increased in other communities, as new interest was shown in becoming Christian in all the communities at approximately the same time, i.e. it can be assumed that the phenomenon had common roots in all of them.

A similar explanation of colonial rule as the indirect cause of conversion could possibly be applied to the case of Ovamboland as a whole. Here we must go further back in history. As shown earlier, the last decades of pre-colonial time were

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190 Tarkkanen, Matti, Die Finnische Mission in Amboland S.W-Afrika (s.d.), p. 3, Hhb3, AFMS, NAF; Tönjes, 1911, p. 306.

191 See Appendix 1.

192 Hayes, 1992, p. 168–169; McKittrick, 2002, p. 141.

193 At least Emil Liljeblad seems to have regarded something like this as the reason for the Kwanyama conversions. Late in 1918 he wrote that the Kwanyama were now eagerly coming to schools and to listen to the Word, because that "villainous tribal chief" had been eliminated and harmony now prevailed in the country. (E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 13 Nov. 1918, Eac21, AFMS, NAF.)

194 For example, the section in Hayes' dissertation dealing with Mandume's alleged persecution of Christians is mostly based on writings in the RMS organ, or on manuscripts written by the Rhenish missionaries for publication. McKittrick's interpretation is based on slightly more reliable sources, the Rhenish missionaries' reports.

195 E.g. *Healing the land*, 1997, p. 62, 74. See also Kreike, 1996, p. 68–69.

violent, with kings and headmen raiding ordinary people's cattle etc. This obviously made people feel insecure, as pointed out by McKittrick, for example.[196] In such circumstances it was important that a commoner did not to make himself look suspicious in the eyes of the nobility, as that might have led to a raid against his property. One way of making oneself appear suspicious (i.e. disloyal) was to seek liaison with an alternative source of power, i.e. missionaries[197]. That had to be avoided for the sake of one's personal safety. After the emergence of the colonial administration this deterrent no longer existed, because the South Africans had curtailed the kings' power and put an end to raiding. Thus it was now safer to lean towards Christianity. The validity of this explanation depends, among other things, on whether there existed a genuine but unfulfilled drive towards Christianity among ordinary people in the late 19th century. That I do not know, and therefore this explanation, albeit logical, also fails to be much more than an alternative hypothesis.

Using colonial rule as an indirect explanation for the conversions thus takes us nowhere. For further evidence regarding its role a direct cause, at least in Uukwanyama, something must be said about one man, Major Charles E. Fairlie. He served as the Union Government Representative at Namakunde from 1915 to 1918, and obviously occupied a very strong position as the "ruler" of Uukwanyma after Mandume's fall. He already seems to have been ruling Uukwanyama much like a king in 1917, judging the more serious criminal cases and acting as a court of appeal in minor cases. When administering the community he was advised by a group of omalenga, who, as Administrator Gorges put it, looked to him for their directions.[198] The Kwanyama had apparently taken seriously Col. de Jager's claim after Mandume's death that Fairlie was now the chief of Uukwanyama,[199] and therefore he had no difficulties in keeping "the truculent tribe" under control, for which he was praised by Resident Commissioner Manning.[200] Not only was Fairlie "the king of Uukwanyama", but he was also a man who was keen to promote Christianity. The missionaries praised him for calling them to Uukwanyama to tend to the local Christians, and for having had a church built in the community during the period when there were no resident missionaries.[201] Fairlie apparently

196 McKittrick, 1995, p. 74–75; McKittrick, 2002, p. 70–74.

197 Such a fear of raising the rulers' suspicions is evident in Erastus Shilongo's narrative which probably describes the situation at the turn of the 20th century. He had been on a labour contract in the south, where he had bought an Oshikwanyama hymnal. When he returned home his uncle advised him not to show the book to anybody, because the king might punish him if he found out about the book. (Quoted in McKittrick, 2002, p. 128–129.)

198 Report on the conduct of the Ouakuanyama Chief Mandume and on the military operations conducted against him in Ovamboland, U.G. 37/1917, par. 41, p. 6; Fairlie's report 25 March 1917 quoted in Bruwer, 1961, p. 27. On the tendency of headmen to leave the decision-making to government officials, see also Gordon, 1978, p. 274–275.

199 Kotze, 1984, p. 83–84. See also Hayes, 1992, p. 241. It is worth noting that Mandume's mother is said to have offered the crown of Uukwanyama to C.H.L. Hahn at some point of time (apparently when Hahn was serving as Government Representative at Namakunde in 1919–1920). If it is true, this also shows that the Kwanyama regarded the local colonial officer as virtually a king. (See Loeb, 1962, p. 37)

200 RCO Annual Report 1917, p. 7, (9), RCO, NAN.

201 E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 13 Nov. 1918, Eac21, AFMS, NAF; *Suomalaista raivaustyötä Afrikan erämaassa*, 1945, p. 43; Peltola, 1958, p. 196.

also encouraged the Kwanyama to be baptised. His personal role, or the role of the early colonial administration in general, in promoting Christianity was later acknowledged not only by the Finnish missionaries, but also by the Kwanyama parish elders and the late Rev. Vilho Kaulinge.[202] Thus we have three phenomena in Uukwanyama: 1) the shock caused by the colonial show of force, 2) a colonial administrator whose position in the community was strong because of that shock, and 3) the keenness of this administrator to promote Christianity. It is no wonder that the Kwanyama were eager to become Christians.

A linkage between the emergence of colonial rule and christianization in Uukwanyama also became evident in 1925, when the mission director, Matti Tarkkanen, was touring Ovamboland. In Engela he asked the parish elders why the number of conversions had begun to drop during the last couple of years. One explanation which they gave, was that "[e]arlier there was fear and uncertainty, which made people to come to the Word, but now, when peace has returned, regression has got the better of it".[203] They obviously referred to fear caused by the war against Mandume, because earlier fears had not made people "come to the Word".

The peak of the first conversion wave was reached in 1922, after which the number of conversions decreased notably. There are a couple of pieces of information which indicate that this decrease could also be explained by reference to changes in the colonial situation. In late 1922 Kalle Petäjä reported that the Africans' respect for the colonial administration was weakening because it had been incapable of forcing King Iipumbu to pay the fine imposed on him after his raid on Uukwanyama in 1921.[204] The same weakening respect is also reflected in the rumours which circulated early in 1923 claiming that the government station in Ondonga would soon be burnt down.[205] It is irrelevant for the present purposes to speculate whether the diminution of respect for the colonial administration in the eyes of the Ovambo was caused by Iipumbu's successful defiance of the colonial authorities, or whether it was a reflection of the increasing resistance to colonial rule evident among Africans in the Police Zone in the early 1920s[206]. What is relevant is the timing: the number of conversions began declining once the colonial administration had turned out to be vulnerable.

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202 Some remarks to the report 1937 of the Government of SWA in regard to the mission work in Ovamboland by central committee Finnish Mission Ovamboland, p. 5, Eaj, AELCIN; Pöytäkirjoja tehty tarkastustilaisuuksissa Ambomaalla 1925 (Mission director's meeting with Engela parish elders 27 June 1925), p. 11, Dga, AELCIN; Peltola, 1958, p. 196; *Healing the land*, 1997, p. 95–96.

203 Pöytäkirjoja tehty tarkastustilaisuuksissa Ambomaalla 1925 (Tarkkanen's meeting with Engela parish elders and teachers 27 June 1925), p. 11, Dga, AELCIN.

204 K. Petäjä to M. Tarkkanen 23 Nov. 1922, Eac23, AFMS, NAF.

205 Hayes, 1992, p. 256.

206 The Garveyite movement ("Africa for the Africans" etc.) began spreading among the African population in the Police Zone during the early 1920s, and some of its ideas apparently also reached Ovamboland. The Africans' new spirit of defiance and militancy led to the Bondelswarts uprising in the Police Zone in 1922. Thanks to returning migrant labourers the Ovambo were no doubt aware of this new defiant attitude in the south and of the difficulties which the colonial administration there was facing. (On Garveyism in the Police Zone see, Emmet, 1999, p. 139–154. On traces of Garveyism in Ovamboland, see Hartmann, 1989, p. 4; Hayes, 1992, p. 255–256; Hartmann, 1998, p. 273–274.)

So much for colonial rule as the cause of the first wave of conversions. It is now time to take up a couple of minor cases which also seem to indicate that christianization and colonial rule were linked together in various ways. The first concerns Ombalantu, where the Mbalantu began converting only in the 1940s. Before that the Ombalantu converts were Mbandja refugees who had fled Ombandja after the calamitous Portuguese occupation of the community in 1915, or later refugees from Portuguese Angola.[207] Here we have a clear example of a community where the sub-group which had suffered more directly from colonial violence was also more eager to convert than that which had been spared such experiences. On the other hand, the emergence of hard-handed Portuguese rule in Ombandja was probably an indirect reason for the Mbalantu reluctance to convert. Many Mbandja fled to Ombalantu because of the Portuguese violence, but antagonism had arisen between them and the Mbalantu,[208] which created an "us and them" situation, and as "they" (the Mbandja "intruders") began converting, "we" (the original Mbalantu inhabitants) could not do the same.

The second case, from Ongandjera, shows how the ups and downs in respect for the colonial administration were reflected in the kings' attitudes towards Christians (and to some extent towards christianization, too[209]). Eetu Järvinen wrote in 1923:

> "Because the Englishmen's war [against Iipumbu of Uukwambi] did not materialize, King Shanika has now swelled up into a great lord, and he also wants to show that to the Christians. He has changed his attitude towards Christians.... and has given several eviction orders. Even whole wards [*omikunda*] with their teachers have been ordered to leave."[210]

But in 1929 the king "stopped intriguing against missionaries" because, according to rumours, he was convinced that they were allied with the colonial administra-

207 On Ombalantu converts, see E. Järvinen's Annual Report 1924 (Ongandjera and Ombalantu), mmm 20–21 Jan. 1925, Appendix 19, Hha9; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus tarkastusmatkasta länsiheimoihin 15–27.6.1926, Hha9; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista länsiheimoissa 1928 (Ombalantu parish inspection 9–10 Oct. 1928), Hha10; H. Saari's Annual Report 1929 (Ombalantu), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 36, Hha11; J. Hopeasalmi's Annual Report 1935 (Ombalantu), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 40, Hha14; K. Himanen's Annual Report 1938 (Ombalantu), mmm 22–23 Feb. 1939, unnumbered appendix, Hha17; Himanen, Kalle, Kertomus lähetystyöstä Ombalantussa ja Okalongossa 1935–1946 [report regarding the mission work in Ombalantu and Okalongo], Hha21. All in AFMS, NAF. On the devastating Portuguese (re)occupation of Ombandja and the Mbandja refugees, see Hayes, 1992, p. 189–192, 200; Kreike, 1996, p. 85–88, 96–98, 423–424.

208 There are some recollections to indicate that the incoming Mbandja raided people's grain stores and cattle in western communities at first, while later the Mbalantu harassed the Mbandja living in Ombalantu. At least in 1928 the antagonism became violent when the Mbalantu began evicting the Mbandja. (See H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 28 Sept. 1928, Eac28, AFMS, NAF; Hayes, 1992, p. 200, 246; McKittrick, 1995, p. 126; McKittrick, 2002, p. 147, 161.)

209 See chapter "The role of kings in the conversion process".

210 E. Järvinen's Annual Report 1923 (Ongandjera and Ombalantu), mmm 8 Jan. 1924, Appendix 18, Hha8, AFMS, NAF. (Transl. KM) See also E. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 4 Dec. 1923, Eac23, AFMS, NAF.

tion and could call government troops in to depose him if they wanted.[211] Shanika died in 1931 and was succeeded by Sheya na Shilongo, who had already been "regent" of Ongandjera since 1929. The new king was described by the missionaries as just and friendly, but even so he launched an anti-Christian campaign after he had ascended the throne. His campaign was so extensive that Olli Suikkanen, the local missionary, expected that mission work in Ongandjera would have to be temporarily suspended. Sheya's campaign continued until January 1932, when it was suddenly stopped.[212] After that the missionaries had no difficulties with the king, and in 1933 the presiding missionary, Viktor Alho, could state that "since the fall of Iipumbu our relationship with the native ruler has been good"[213].

It appears that both Shanika and Sheya somehow saw the Christians, the missionaries and the colonial administration as being parts of the same group, so that when the administration appeared weak it was safe to take action against the other Europeans and their followers, but when the administration was considered to be strong, it was wise to refrain from action against the missionaries or the Christians. It is worth noting that Sheya ended his anti-Christian campaign at the same time as the conflict between the Finns and Iipumbu in Uukwambi reached its peak. Apparently Sheya calculated that Iipumbu's behaviour had now become such that the colonial administration could not leave it unpunished, and therefore, for the sake of his own position, he decided not to continue with the same anti-Christian campaigning which had been characteristic of Iipumbu's behaviour in recent years.

The third case concerns Uukwambi during the last year of Iipumbu's reign. In October 1931 Selma Markkanen, who was the inspector of mission schools in the western communities, reported that prospects for proselytizing in Uukwambi were much better than in the other western communities because a large number of young Kwambi heathens had recently come to the mission schools.[214] The Uukwambi teachers also reported a notable new interest in Christianity among the heathen.[215] At first sight this does not make much sense. Why were these young people rushing into mission schools at the same time as the conflict between King Iipumbu and the missionaries was escalating and the king was constantly harassing

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211 K. Suikkanen to M. Tarkkanen 14 Feb. 1928 (in fact 1929), Eac28, AFMS, NAF.

212 See O. Suikkanen to M. Tarkkanen 9 March 1931 & 15 June 1931 & 29 Jan. 1932 & 15 Sept. 1932, Eac30–31; O. Suikkanen's Annual Report 1930 (Ongandjera), mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 30, Hha11; Ibid. 1931, mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 38, Hha11; Ibid. 1932, mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendix 23, Hha23. All in AFMS, NAF.

213 Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista Ambomaalla 1933 (Ongandjera parish inspection 1933), Hha12, AFMS, NAF.

214 S. Markkanen to M. Tarkkanen 5 Oct. 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF. Markkanen's view is confirmed by Onni Aho, Rev. Liljeblad and statistics. Uukwambi elementary schools had 766 pupils in 1931, while the corresponding figures in previous years had been around 300 in 1928, 484 in 1929 and 393 in 1930. (See Aho, Onni, Nekulun asia [the Nekulu affair] 25 Jan. 1932, Hha11; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 22 Jan. 1932, Eac31; E. Lehto, Länsiheimojen koulujen tarkastus 1928 [school inspection in western communities], Hha10; H. Saari, Koulutarkastuskertomus Ambomaan länsiheimoista 1929, Hha11; H. Saari's Annual Report 1930 [school inspections in western communities], mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 36, Hha11; S. Markkanen's Annual Report 1931 [school inspections... west], mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 42, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF.)

215 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 8 June 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF.

the Christian community[216]? Their behaviour makes sense only if we assume that they were calculating, in the same way as Sheya apparently did, that Iipumbu's reign was coming to an end. They may have been afraid that the South Africans might use force in Uukwambi, in the same way as they had done in Uukwanyama in 1917, and therefore it was now time to take the necessary measures to avoid the effects of such an eventuality, and to show loyalty to the colonial rulers by professing an interest in their religion.

There is still one question which calls for an answer: What was the actual link between the emerging colonial rule and the conversions, i.e. why did the colonial rule induce the Ovambo to seek conversion? There are basically (at least) two possible answers: 1) after colonial show of force people would realize that the Europeans were (militarily) more powerful than they were, and the adoption of Europeans' religion may have been an attempt to acquire the same power by some sort of magical means,[217] and 2) conversion was part of a practical survival strategy in a new situation. The colonial authorities had shown their force, and there was a possibility that similar violence might also be used in the future. In order to minimize the threat on a personal level, it was reasonable to show the source of potential violence that as a Christian "I" was now part of the same group as "you" and therefore there was no question of disloyalty.

I cannot give any definite answer to the question of which of the above options was the actual link between colonial rule and conversion. In some cases it may have been predominately one or the other, and in others it may have been both, while in some cases it may have been neither. If I was asked to choose the one which I regard as more probable, however, I would go for the second explanation. Sheya's change of attitude and the Kwambi rush to the mission schools both tend to point towards this option. There are also two obvious examples of how people could occasionally seek mission services in order to demonstrate their loyalty to the colonial administration: After Native Commissioner Hahn had publicly told the heathens to go to school in 1935, the number of new pupils in the western communities temporarily doubled or even tripled, although most of them dropped out after a while. A similar thing also happened in Uukwanyama in 1939, when the local Assistant Native Commissioner advised people, Christian and heathen alike, to send their children to school.[218] In these cases going to school, or sending one's children to school, was clearly a show of obedience, but as soon as the people thought that they had proved their loyalty, they left school, because neither schooling nor becoming a Christian was something they were genuinely interested in.

216 See e.g. O. Aho's Annual Report 1931 (Elim), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 35, Hha11, AFMS, NAF.

217 Cf. Uka, 1989, p. 145.

218 A.W. Björklund to U. Paunu 27 July 1939, Eac39; S. Markkanen's Annual Report 1935 (School inspections in western communities), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 39, Hha14. Both in AFMS, NAF.

Although the exact age structure of the converts during the first wave is not known, the available evidence suggests that the great majority of them were young people at that time. To my mind, this too supports the idea that the conversions in the early 1920s were part of a survival strategy in a new colonial situation. Young people had more to lose or gain in the long run under colonialism. They had years ahead of them, years during which they had to be concerned about how the European rule might affect their lives. Some of the older people, on the other hand, may have decided that conversion was not worth all the effort, because they would die in a few years anyway.

On a more general level it can also be pointed out that Shekutaamba Nambala, himself an Ovambo theologian, has argued that Namibians have never really have made any distinction between religion and politics, or between the church and the state.[219] This is indeed evident in the pre-colonial role of the Ovambo kings, for example. They were not only administrators but they also had magico-ritualistic roles which were considered to be important for the well-being of their communities. Therefore, since religion and politics were mixed in pre-colonial communities, it is not out of the question that the same idea could have continued to exist in the colonial era.

To sum up the causes of the first wave of conversions, it must first be stated that the great famine of 1915/1916 is not a credible explanation. Not only is there a problem of the time-span between the alleged cause and effect, but also the available qualitative evidence speaks against this option. It is more credible to attribute the conversions to the fall of King Mandume in 1917. This was a shock which made people seek protective measures against similar acts of violence by the colonial authorities in the future. One such measure was to show loyalty (or submission) to the new rulers by taking an interest in what was regarded as their religion. Thus, even though the Finnish missionaries often saw the colonial officials as their enemies, they should have been grateful that colonial rule existed, because without it their work of christianizing the Ovambo would apparently have been even more of an uphill struggle than it in fact turned out to be.

A J-curve?

If the emergence of colonial rule is seen as the main reason for the beginning of mass conversions in Ovamboland, the interpretation of Ovambo conversions becomes basically a socio-structural one. Yet it is easy to see that the colonial show of force in 1917 as an impetus for conversion also lends support to Horton's theory. This was the final blow against a microcosm which had already been eroded by labour migration, because Mandume's fall showed the people, all of them, that there was indeed a different world, a very powerful one, outside the world in which they had been living.

219 Nambala, 1990, p. 10–11, 216.

As pointed out earlier, Ovambo Christianity was at the "mixing" stage of Fisher's Historical Explanation after the mass conversions began in the 1920s. But the Historical Explanation also has another aspect which, *mutatis mutandis*, was present in the Ovambo case. Fisher emphasised the role of individuals in the conversion process by stating that the orthodox form of religion is kept alive by a few individuals during the mixing stage. The role of a few individuals was also greatly in evidence in the Uukwanyama conversions, not as keepers of the orthodox tradition but as carriers of the new faith. The Kwanyama drive towards Christianity began at a time when there were no missionaries in the community, and proselytism was carried out by a few Christians who had been baptised by the Rhenish missionaries, the most active among them being Simson Situa and Wilhelm Kafita.[220] Some non-Christians apparently also participated in spreading the new religion.[221] Although the activities of these individuals were obviously not the cause of the Kwanyama interest in Christianity, it is still possible to speculate whether the movement would have been quite as strong if proselytism had been in the hands of white missionaries. Probably not, because now the work was being done by indigenous people, and therefore there was no such contradiction between Europeans and Africans which Kivinen later deemed to be the main reason why European missionaries can never fully evangelize African people.[222]

All the existing theories thus have some aspects which can be found in the Ovambo case, but none of them appears to provide an entirely satisfactory explanation for the *longue durée* process of Ovambo conversion. It is obviously risky to try to create new theories which are based only on one empirical case, but it is worth taking the risk, because the theory which I shall propose below is actually a modified version of one existing theory of revolutions[223] . The original theory in question is the J-curve theory of revolution, also known as the progressive relative deprivation theory. This was created by James C. Davies in the early 1960s as an attempt to combine the views of Marx and de Tocqueville on the causes of revolutions and has since become a standard analytical tool for explaining violent social upheavals, because it seems to be at least a satisfactory model for explaining the causes of most revolutions.

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220 Rakel Nailenge, interviewed on the 30 Nov. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama; *Healing the land*, 1997, p. 95; Peltola, 1958, p. 195–196.

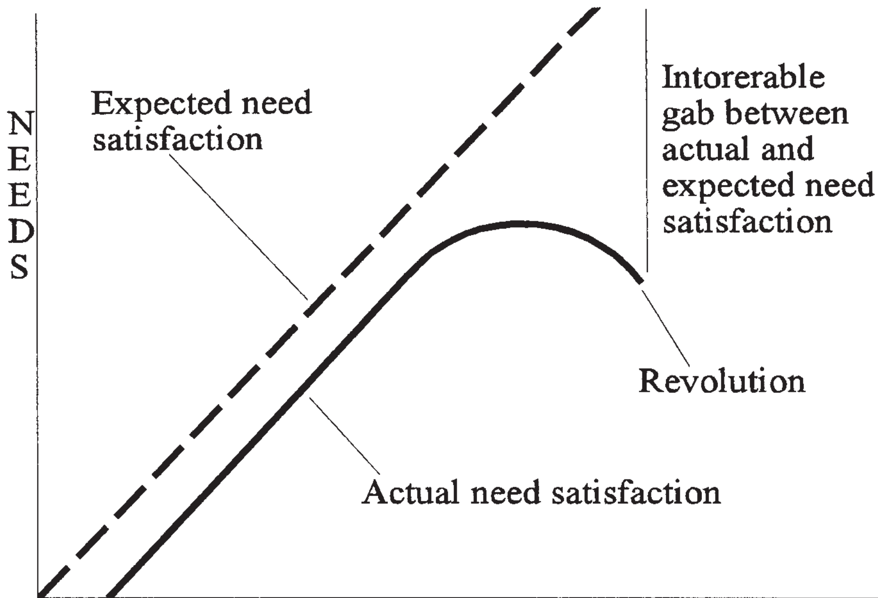
221 In 1920 a group of Kwanyama heathens, led a by heathen man, came to see the missionary August Hänninen, who had recently taken up residence as the first permanent FMS missionary in Uukwanyama. The leader had taught his group the basics of the Christian religion and now they were coming to ask for baptism. (A. Hänninen's Annual Report 1920 [Uukwanyama], mmm12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 14c, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.)

222 W. Kivinen to K.A. Paasio 5 Nov. 1934, Eac35, AFMS, NAF.

223 The view of political revolutions and conversions as somewhat similar phenomena is not quite as far-fetched as it might seem. Becoming an adherent of revolutionary ideas and participating in revolutionary activities may include a similar psychological change as the type of conversion in which an individual changes both religious affiliation and religious beliefs. A Similarity also exists in cases where an individual just participates in revolutionary activities or just changes religious affiliation (without changing his/her convictions), because in both cases the individual takes a considerable risk if the society concerned is opposed to radical political or mental changes (as most human communities probably are).

Davies' basic idea is that revolutions are most likely to occur when a prolonged period of positive economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal. Before the period of improvement begins, there is normally something which might be called "difficult times", i.e. a situation in which people are unable to satisfy their needs. Then, for some reason, their ability to satisfy their needs (whether economic or "social", e.g. the need for freedom) begins to improve. This then continues for a prolonged period of time. Simultaneously, also people's expectations of continued satisfaction of their needs increase because their ability to do so in the immediate past had improved. As long as there is no appreciable difference between what people want and what they get, they will remain calm, and social peace will prevail. But then something happens which ends the positive trend in the ability to satisfy one's needs. It may be economic decline, the emergence of a repressive government or something else. Anyway, now people's actual ability to satisfy their needs begins to decline while their expectations continue to rise. In such a situation they feel disappointed and deprived. Finally they revolt when the gap between what they expect to get and what they actually do get becomes intolerable.[224] Thus, Davies' road to revolution is like an overturned letter J, as shown in the following figure.

Fig. 1. The J-Curve of revolution



Vertical dimension = satisfaction of needs
Horizontal dimension = time
(Adopted from Davies, James, Toward a theory of revolution. In *When men revolt and why*, 1971, p. 135)

224 Davies, 1971, p. 134–147.

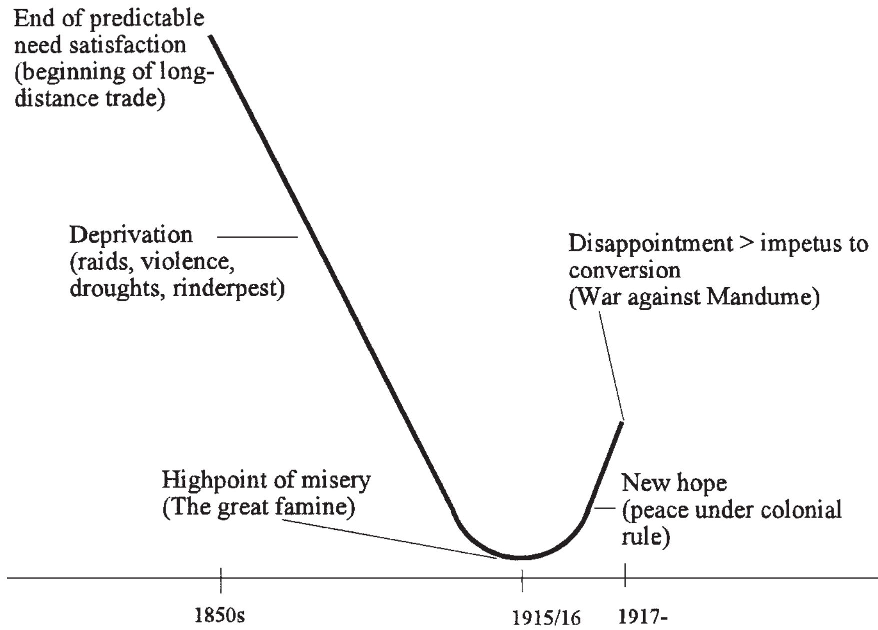
Davies' J-curve as such obviously has nothing to do with the pre-conversion situation in Ovamboland. But let us retain the two main components of his theory, deprivation and the J-curve, and turn his J upside down, into its proper position. This J-curve can now be taken to indicate a process in which there is first a long period of deprivation, followed by a short period of actual or assumed improvement in the situation, but this trend comes to, or appears to come to, an sudden end. This gives us the J-curve of conversion, which in the Ovambo case was made up of the following phenomena:

Before the J began, the Ovambo were living in a state of considerable isolation from other communities that were different from theirs, and their social system and daily lives remained unaffected by outside influences. Consequently, things basically went on as they had done for generations, and people were able to predict to what extent they would be able to satisfy their needs. There was not necessarily any increase in actual satisfaction, but there was an equilibrium between actual and expected satisfaction. Then something broke this isolation and equilibrium, and a prolonged period of deprivation began. In the Ovambo case this was the emergence of long-distance trade with Europeans, which led to increased violence in intra-community and inter-community relations. The feeling of deprivation caused by recurrent raids was further emphasised by droughts at the turn of the twentieth century, and by the rinderpest of the 1890s. The highpoint of misery, which is also the low point on our J-curve, was reached during the great famine of 1915/1916. At this point nobody revolted or converted because everybody was occupied with staying alive. There was no revolution of any kind, because the future looked totally hopeless[225]. After the misery point came an upturn, when people expected that "happy days would be here again", that is, they believed that they would be able to satisfy their needs in a way which had not been possible for a long time. In the Ovambo case such hopes were not aroused only by the end of the most severe famine in living memory, but also by the coming of the colonial administration, because it was believed that this would put an end to raiding and violence[226]. But then something happened which seemed to dash people's hopes of the new rule. The South Africans' war against Mandume was a great disappointment for the people, because it seemed to mark the beginning of a new period of violence, which was this time caused by the Europeans. People's new-born optimism was shattered, and they began thinking that the problem might be solved by a revolutionary novelty such as conversion to the Europeans' religion. Thus, the J-curve of conversion in the Ovambo case was equivalent to the one in the next figure.

225 Revolutions do not take place if people feel that there is absolutely no hope for a better future (see e.g. Davies, 1971, p. 146; Stone, 1972, p. 14).

226 Several of McKittrick's informants who were children in 1915/1916 told her that initially people felt relieved when the colonial officials arrived, because their coming was seen as a sign that the violent times would now be over. (McKittrick, 1995, p. 78, 80)

Fig. 2. The J-Curve of conversion (Ovambo case)



Vertical dimension = actual satisfaction of needs
Horizontal dimension = time

This J-curve is a construct based on only one empirical case, and it is therefore quite easy to find flaws in it. Somebody might claim, for example, that it has distorted Davies' original theory to such an extent that it cannot derive any "legitimacy" by claiming to be a modification of the original theory. That is not how I see it. Both theories are based on the idea that there is first a long trend in one direction and then a short one in another. In Davies' theory, deprivation, which he also sees as a precondition for revolution, is simply emphasised less than in my theory. Furthermore, in both theories it is basically people's disappointment which finally launches the process that leads to revolution/conversion.

A critical reader might ask why mass conversions did not take place during the long period of deprivation, and another critical reader might point out that my theory, like Horton's, seems to ignore entirely the role of actively proselytizing missionaries in conversions. These two points are interrelated. The J-curve obviously could not have ended in conversions had there been no missionaries preaching about Christianity. It was they who offered people a choice, but large numbers of people could take that choice only when the message of the Word had been distributed widely and for long enough. On the other hand, it is quite possible, and even probable, that some people actually converted during the deprivation period in an attempt to undo the harm caused by the raids etc. Some early converts probably believed, for example, that association with "rich missionaries" would im-

prove their economic security,[227] but that was not how the masses behaved. We must also be careful not to exaggerate the importance of the missionaries' proselytism in the conversion process. Its insignificance as the primary cause of conversions was emphasised by the mission director, Matti Tarkkanen, in the 1920s[228] and by the missionary Lehto in the 1930s,[229] and the same can also be said of the Ndonga and Kwanyama conversions, for both these communities had had actively proselytizing missionaries for a long time (Ondonga since 1870 and Uukwanyma since 1891) but large numbers of people began converting only when they themselves felt that conversion to Christianity might bring some advantages, irrespective of the missionaries' keen propagation of the Gospel. The deprivation period of the late 19th century was caused by familiar phenomena such as droughts and raiding kings, and therefore only some individuals came to think that they could try to improve their personal situation by associating with an unfamiliar group and its ideas. The masses, on the other hand, began converting only when they faced with a potential danger which was undoubtedly caused by a foreign power, because now association with a foreign system of beliefs seemed like a natural way of trying to combat the danger.

Conversions in the early 1950s and the Epapudhuko

The wave of conversions in the early 1950s is in many respects much more problematic to explain than the beginning of mass conversions in the 1920s. There are some background factors which indicate that it was bound to take place, but as far as its timing is concerned one has to agree with Hamlet: "Ay there's the rub". In other words, the reasons why it took place in the early 1950s remain somewhat obscure.

The first background factor which explains the rise in conversion figures in the 1950s is the emergence of the idea that being Christian and being "civilized" (or "advanced") were the same thing. Although there are some pieces of information hinting that this thought may already have existed among some non-Christians during the first decades of the twentieth century,[230] missionaries' references to its

227 See chapter "The role of material aims...".

228 Tarkkanen, Matti, Kertomus Suomen Lähetysseuran lähetysalalle Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastuksesta 1925, p. 22, Dga, AELCIN.

229 According to Lehto's view, which he claimed was based on extensive inquiries among converts, only one per cent had converted because of sermons given by either missionaries or Ovambo clergy. ([Lehto, Erkki], Vieläkin Ambolähetyksemme saarna- ja koulutoiminnasta, s.d. (but 1934), Hha12, AFMS, NAF.)

230 The assistant mission director, Hannu Haahti, claimed in 1912 that Ndonga non-Christians used the word "pagan" as a term of abuse. Many years later, in 1929, King Iipumbu of Uukwambi visited Elim station. The king was drunk and asked the missionary Aho to teach him. He then nudged his non-Christian son Nujoma (two of his other sons had been baptized a couple of months earlier), who was accompanying him, and said: "These people, what do they know? Those blacks know nothing." (See Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 29, Lb, AELCIN; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 15 July 1929, Eac29, AFMS, NAF.) On non-indigenous names as status symbols, see W. Kivinen to U.Paunu 30 Jan. 1937, Eac38, AFMS, NAF.

existence become more frequent only after World War II.[231] Rev. Shinana also emphasised, referring to the 1950s and 1960s, that people regarded Christianity and "development" as being the same thing, and that this idea drew many non-Christians to the congregations. Such an idea seems to have influenced at least the newly baptised Christian who told the missionary Hukka in 1957 that he had converted in order not to appear ignorant and backward.[232] That this kind of idea emerged, or was more widely adopted, after the war is not surprising. One factor which no doubt contributed to its emergence was the increased number of formally and more widely educated Ovambo teachers, i.e. people who had graduated from teacher training school. Thus there were 93 trained teachers working in Ovamboland in 1931/1932 (some 37 per cent of all teachers), while the number was 227 in 1952 (70 per cent of the teachers in official schools).[233] Thus more and more non-Christians were apparently coming into first-hand contact with Christians who had become more educated, whom they then looked up to as their role models.

The identification of the Christian faith with "civilization" may also have been caused by something which, in the spirit of Horton, could be called "the final shattering of the microcosm". Some kind of clear change in attitudes had taken place between the late 1930s and the late 1940s. This was noticed by Walde Kivinen when he returned to Ovamboland in 1949 after having been away for a decade. He described the new atmosphere:

> "A new time has arrived... People are on the move. They are off the ground. They desperately want to absorb everything new, whether it is good or bad ... [A]ll the lust, disgustingness and various -isms which originate from the white race will slowly but certainly inflict deadly, burning hot wounds on men's hearts and women's lives even in the most remote areas... [Yet at the same time] enormous masses are on the move [towards Christianity]. Meeting rooms are always full and the walls of churches are in danger of tumbling down because of the great number of people inside. But this is no revival in the European sense. Instead it is like a mass of drifters or homeless refugees looking for a new spiritual home and a fixed point. The spiritual home of paganism has been 'bombed' and has collapsed, and people are therefore now just refugees."[234]

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231 See Kivinen, Walde, Raportti allekirjoittaneen matkasta... Ambomaalle 1949–1950, p. 6, Dgb, AELCIN; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 93, Dga, AELCIN; Lindström, Liina, [untitled report about government school policies], s.d. 1955, Hha26, AFMS, NAF.

232 Natanael Shinana, interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama; A. Hukka's Annual Report 1957 (Western parish district), mmm 14–17 Jan. 1958, Appendix 12, Hha29, AFMS, NAF. Similar ideas are also present in many of McKittrick's narratives acquired from informants. (McKittrick, 1995, p. 20)

233 S. Markkanen's Annual Report 1931 (Schools in western communities), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 42, Hha11; H. Ranttila's Annual Report 1932 (Ondonga schools) & J. Syrjä's Annual Report 1932 (Engela), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendices 13 and 15, Hha12; Statistiek oor die skole van die Finse Sending in Owamboland van 28 Januarie tot 16 Augustus 1952 and Tilastoa SLS:n Ambomaalla toimivista kouluista, mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendices 19.1 and 19.2, Hha24. All in AFMS, NAF.

234 Kivinen, Walde, Raportti allekirjoittaneen matkasta... Ambomaalle 1949–1950, p. 4–5, Dgb, AELCIN. (Transl. KM)

Kivinen's analysis clearly seems to point out that the "microcosm" had indeed now finally been shattered and people were very keen to adopt "modernity" and Christianity as a part of it. What caused this change is beyond my capability to explain, but it may have something to do with the experiences of the men who joined the Native Military Corps during the war. Although the missionaries claimed that these men had adopted unchristian attitudes during their period of service[235], they also seem to have adopted a desire for the skills which were needed in "modern life". One example of this concerns the Kwanyma ex-servicemen, who were very keen to learn English.[236] It may be that their drive for everything "modern" also influenced the larger masses.

Another factor which apparently contributed to the increase in conversions was the intensification of proselytism through the re-founding of the "bush schools" in the 1940's. Bush schools (officially congregational schools) served remote areas far away from the official schools. They had no permanent buildings, their teachers were untrained, and the curriculum usually consisted merely of religious instruction and reading. The mission had had such schools up to the mid-1930s, when the government had ordered them to be closed.[237] After the war the missionaries became concerned because so many people in remote areas seemed to be without any possibilities for education, and beyond the reach of effective proselytism. Bush schools were seen as the answer to the problem, and in 1947 two bush schools were founded by the Oshitayi parish. Because the colonial administration only reminded them about the illegality of bush schools but did nothing else, the missionaries took this as de facto permission to establish schools wherever they were needed. As a consequence, dozens of new bush schools emerged in the late 1940s and early 1950s, so that by 1953 there were 98 of them, with some 4,200 pupils, while the number of official elementary schools was 79, with 13,300 pupils.[238] In

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235 Chapter "Evolution of the missionary-Ovambo relations...".

236 A.W. Björklund to U. Paunu 21 March 1946, Eac41, AFMS, NAF.

237 E.g. NCO Annual Report 1934. p. 20–22 & NCO Annual Report 1935, p. 12–13, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Copy Chief Native Commissioner to NCO 7 June 1935 & NCO to the Secretary for SWA 24 Nov. 1935, A489/2, SWAA; Hatakka, s.d., p. 26–27; Lehtonen, 1999, p. 96–97.

238 See V. Alho to T. Vapaavuori 28 July 1947 and 18 Sept. 1947, Eac42; Copy T. Vapaavuori to V. Alho 26 Aug. 1947, Eac42; Copy V. Alho to NCO 23 March 1948, Eac43; V. Alho to T. Vapaavuori 30 March 1948, 14 May 1948, 1 June 1948 and 23 Dec. 1948, Eac43; V. Alho's Annual Report 1947 (Olukonda, Ontananga, Onayena) & K.J. Petäjä's Annual Report 1947 (Oshigambo, Oshitayi), mmm 8–9 Jan. 1948, Appendix 2 and unnumbered appendix, Hha21; V. Alho's Annual Report 1948 & A. Hukka's Annual Report 1948 (Elim), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1949, Appendices 2 and 32, Hha21; V. Alho's Annual Report 1949 (Olukonda/Ontananga/Onayena) & A. Kekki's Annual Report 1949 (Ombalantu) & E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1949 (Uukwanyama), mmm 25–26 Jan. 1950, Appendices 1, 31 and 34, Hha22; V. Alho's Annual Reports 1950 (general report & Onayena, Onyaanya, Ontananga, Olukonda) & L. Lindström's Annual Report 1950 (schools) & J. Hopeasalmi's Annual Report 1950 (Oshigambo) & E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1950 (Uukwanyama) & M. Kantele's Annual Report 1950 (Elim), mmm 24–25 Jan. 1951, Appendices 1, 2, 14, 16, 20, 28, Hha22; V. Alho's Annual Report 1951 (general report) & L. Lindström's Annual Report 1951 (schools) & E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1951 (Uukwanyama), mmm 24–25 Jan. 1952, Appendices 1, 2, 23, Hha23; Tilastoa SLS:n kouluista Ambomaalla 26.1–15.8.1953 [statistics – official schools] & Tilastoa SLS:n kouluista Ambomaalla 1953 – pensaskoulut [statistics – bush schools], Hha25. All in AFMS, NAF. Copy NCO to Chief Native Commissioner 28 March 1948 & Chief Native Commissioner to NCO 3 Aug. 1948, 7/3/1, NAO, NAN.

the opinion of a number of missionaries, these new schools turned out to be an effective means of proselytizing among the remaining heathens.[239]

Bush schools were not the only thing that made proselytism more effective in the post-war era. Another, probably more important, novelty was trained evangelists, who came on the scene in the 1940s. The story here is actually very similar to that of the bush schools, as there had been some evangelists working in Ovamboland during the first decades of the twentieth century, and teachers were also expected to evangelize,[240] but in 1936 the colonial administration practically forbade the work of evangelists by ordering that only trained Ovambo ministers were allowed to preach freely, because untrained and "indiscreet" evangelists had become involved in conflicts with traditional leaders.[241] Although the "preaching ban" had obviously never totally suppressed the evangelists' work, the missionaries still regarded it as an intolerable hindrance to evangelization. Therefore, they decided in 1943 to openly defy the government by beginning a training course for evangelists.[242] The next year 36 evangelists graduated and began going around the remote areas holding prayer meetings. During the first year they were said to have talked to some 30,000 people in Uukwanyama alone, while over 1,500 heathens participated in their meetings in Uukwambi. It was no wonder that the missionaries were happy with their work, which they considered to have given a major boost to christianization.[243] The colonial administration was less happy, however, and re-

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239 V. Alho's Annual Report 1948 (Olukonda, Ontananga, Onayena), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1949, Appendix 2, Hha21; V. Alho's Annual Report 1949, mmm 25–26 Jan. 1950, Appendix 1, Hha22; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1950 (Uukwanyama), mmm 24–25 Jan. 1951, Appendix 20, Hha22; S. Kyllönen's Annual Report 1954 (schools), mmm 19–20 Jan. 1955, Appendix 3, Hha26. All in AFMS, NAF. Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani ... 1954, p. 82, Dga, AELCIN; Hatakka, s.d., p. 28.

240 See e.g. Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 29, Lb, AELCIN; S. Rainio's Annual Report 1915 (Onandjokwe hospital), mmm 22 March 1916, Appendix 5, Hha7, AFMS, NAF; T. Vapaavuori's Annual Report 1934 (Ombalantu), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 39, Hha13, AFMS, NAF; Peltola, 1958, p. 213.

241 Copy Secretary for SWA to the mission director of the FMS 27 Jan. 1938, Eaj, AELCIN; Secretary for SWA to U. Paunu 23 Dec. 1937, Eac38, AFMS, NAF; V. Alho's Annual Report 1943 (general report), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1944, unnumbered appendix, Hha20, AFMS, NAF.

242 See V. Alho to U. Paunu 6 Nov. 1937 & 12 Oct. 1938, Eac38; W. Björklund to U. Paunu 15 Dec. 1938, Eac38; V. Alho to U. Paunu 16 March and 15 May 1939, Eac39; W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 7 March 1939, Eac39; H. Saari to U. Paunu 24 July 1939, Eac39; Memo concerning the information which was received from Viktor Alho by radio 10 April 1942, Eac40; Copy V. Alho to Rev. A. Holmio (Quincy, Mass.) 13 March 1943, Eac40; V. Alho to U. Paunu (to Uppsala, Sweden) 30 April 1943, Eac40; Alho, Viktor, Mitä voidaan tehdä pakanoiden saavuttamiseksi [What can be done to get in touch with heathens], mmm 31 Aug 1937 §27, Appendix 12.2, Hha15; Alho, Viktor, Korjattava kohta Afrikka-lähetyksessämme [An item concerning our mission in Africa which has to be changed], mmm 22–23 Feb. 1939, unnumbered appendix, Hha17; Mmm 20–21 Jan. 1943 §5, Hha20; V. Alho's Annual Report 1943 (general report), mmm12–13 Jan. 1944, unnumbered appendix, Hha20. All in AFMS, NAF.

243 See A.W. Björklund to U. Paunu 19 April 1945, Eac41; E. Hynönen to U. Paunu 12 Nov. 1945, Eac41; V. Alho's Annual Report 1944 (Olukonda, Ontananga, Onayena) & A.W. Björklund's Annual Report 1944 (Uukwanyama) & E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1944 (Uukwambi), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1945, Appendices 2, 19 and 28, Hha20; V. Alho's Annual Report 1945 (general report) & E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1945 (Uukwambi), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1946, Appendices 1 and 25, Hha20; A. Hukka's Annual Report 1948 (Uukwambi), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1949, Hha21. All in AFMS, NAF.

minded the missionaries that the evangelists were actually working illegally. The administration resigned itself to the *fait accompli*, however, and a congregational training school was opened at Engela in 1950 to train evangelists, who were now allowed to preach freely.[244] As a consequence, there were 61 evangelists at work in 1956, while the number of Ovambo pastors was 41.[245]

The numbers of Ovambo evangelists and pastors point to one noteworthy phenomenon which may explain something of the increase in conversions after World War II, that proselytism had now been Africanized. The daily running of parishes had been handed over to Ovambo pastors, and there were more Ovambo evangelists and bush school teachers spreading the message. It may be that non-Christians took this development as a sign that the Christian faith (and the church) was now becoming a truly African matter instead of an alien one. If this indeed was the case, it would obviously have lowered the mental threshold for conversion. But it is also possible that the Africanization of proselytism affected conversions more directly. Some missionaries had emphasised well before the second wave what an important role the indigenous preachers had in effective proselytism.[246] Now a stage had been reached at which they had adopted that role. It can be assumed that there was less room for misunderstandings and suspicions now that both the subjects and objects of the proselytism process were people of the same cultural background. Furthermore, because of the cultural background factor, the Ovambo preachers were probably more able than the missionaries to strike the right note in order to make their message appear convincing.[247] All these factors can be assumed to have made conversions easier.

The increase in conversions in the 1950s was obviously not caused entirely by more effective proselytism or changed attitudes towards Christianity. There appears also to have been a demographic cause. Although the colonial censuses have their shortcomings, it is still evident that there occurred something which Notkola and Siiskonen call "almost a kind of population explosion" in Ovamboland in the 1940s.[248] Between the censuses of 1942 and 1951 the population increased from

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244 See V. Alho's Annual Report 1944 (general report), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1945, Appendix1, Hha20; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1950 (Uukwanyama), mmm 24–25 Jan. 1951, Appendix 20, Hha22; V. Alho's Annual Report 1951 (general report), mmm 24–25 Jan. 1952, unnumbered appendix, Hha23. All in AFMS, NAF. Presiding missionary V. Alho's circular to missionaries 9 Sept. 1947, Eae, AELCIN; Peltola, 1958, p. 245.

245 Tilastotietoja SLS:n toiminnasta lähetysalallaan Ambomaalla 1956 [statistics concerning the FMS work in Ovamboland], Hha28, AFMS, NAF.

246 See e.g. K. Petäjä to M. Tarkkanen 31 Dec. 1917, Eac20; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 25 March 1920, Eac22; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 22 April 1931, Eac30; W. Kivinen to K.A. Paasio 5 Nov. 1934 and 16 June 1935, Eac35-36; Kivinen, Walde, Mistä kenkä puristaa? In Raportti lähetysjohtaja tohtori Uno Paunulle hänen saapuessaan tarkastusmatkalle Ambomaalle 1937 [Report to the mission director U. Paunu at his arrival for an inspection tour in Ovamboland in 1937], Appendix 1, Hhb2. All in AFMS, NAF.

247 In Norman Etherington's view, the vast scale of twentieth century conversions indicates that the transformation cannot be an outcome of the missionaries' direct influence but must have been caused by the cultural translation of Christianity by African evangelists. (Etherington, 1996, p. 217.)

248 Notkola & Siiskonen, 2000, p. 17.

some 126,000 to around 200,000,[249] that is, by some 58 per cent. This means that there was in due course a larger pool of young people who, as shown earlier, were predominant among converts. On the other hand, it must be pointed out that this demographic phenomenon cannot explain the beginning of the second conversion wave in the late 1940s and early 1950s, because the great majority of the "boom babies" would have been too young to convert at that time, but it may explain why the conversion figures remained fairly high in the late 1950s and into the 1960s. Some of the boom generation apparently began converting in the late 1950s, because the median age of converts decreased from what it had been during the first half of the decade.[250]

So far so good. Now we have some background factors which show that an increase in conversions was probable after the Second World War. More effective proselytism, a new attitude towards Christianity and demographic changes all contributed to it. But they alone are scarcely a sufficient set of explanations for the second conversion wave, for even if proselytism was more effective, people would hardly have converted unless they felt that they would gain something out of it. We are therefore still faced with the question of why conversions began increasing and why this happened in the early 1950s. The combination of the above factors apparently explains something of the timing, too, but the question can also be approached from another viewpoint. It should be noted that 1952, which was the high point of the second conversion wave, was also the year of a short but fierce revivalist movement, the *Epapudhuko* in Oshindonga. This obviously cannot have been the cause of the conversion wave, because it took place at the height of the wave, but their simultaneous occurrence suggests that they had common roots, at least to some extent. The credibility of this idea is increased by the fact that not only Christians were carried away by the revival movement, but in some cases also non-Christians[251] . It is therefore time to have a look at the *Epapudhuko*[252] .

The revival of 1952 was a unique event in Ovambo history. It lasted less than a year, but the majority of Christian joined it and the rest were affected by it. Still it did not come out of the blue, but had apparently been in the air for some time. The late 1940s and early 1950s had already witnessed some occasional cases of phenomena which later became more common during the *Epapudhuko*. For example, three Kwanyama pastors wanted in 1949 to found an organization which would have engaged preachers to spread the Word in remote areas independently of the FMS. The Uukwanyama headmen were in favour of the idea, but the colonial authorities forbade it.[253] In the same year a large group of Christians in

249 Notkola & Siiskonen, 2000, Table 3.1., p. 19.

250 See Table 3.

251 S. Kyllönen to T. Vapaavuori 11 Sept. 1952, Eac45, AFMS, NAF; Kekki, 1964, p. 36; *Suomen Lähetyssanomia* 12/1952, p. 207 (extracts from pastoral students' letters).

252 The best existing other English description and analysis of the Ovambo revival is that by Meredith McKittrick (2002, p. 247–262).

253 Assistant Native Commissioner (Oshikango) to NCO 18 Sept. 1949; Copy NCO to Chief Native Commissioner 17 Dec. 1949; Chief Native Commissioner to NCO 25 Jan. 1950. All in 7/3/1, NAO, NAN.

Ombalantu participated in a Bible Week, during which many began feeling guilty on account of their old sins and confessed them in public. The next year the local pastor in Oshitayi, Johannes Itope, decided to start a campaign against sin, and (with the missionary Alho's approval) ordered all Christian women whose husbands had concubines to leave their husbands immediately. Finally, the Omundaungilo church in Uukwanyama was full for the whole of Easter Week in 1951, and the people attending the services wept on their knees over their sins.[254]

The process which led to the spread of the revival throughout Ovamboland seems to have begun in March 1952, when a short course for Bible circle instructors was held in Engela. One of the participants was Kleopas Johannes (Itope), son of the pastor Johannes Itope. He had recently returned from the Union, where he had been studying at the Dorothea Mission School for African evangelists. Antti Kekki and other missionaries on the course soon noticed that Kleopas was a convincing speaker. Since he was also very willing to evangelize, the missionaries decided to give him a chance. It was agreed that he should hold meetings in Etundja in Uukwnayma and, if his preaching there should turn out to be successful, he should continue his work in Ondobe. In both places he was a great success, and from then on the revival began to spread through the people who had participated in these meetings. The *Epapudhuko* first spread among the Kwanyma, but by April it had already reached parts of Ondonga as well, and in May, when the schools were on holiday, it spread further with the pupils at higher schools, who travelled around the country carrying the word about it. Revival meetings now began in Uukwambi, and also in the western communities a little later. The *Epapudhuko* flourished for a few months, but in November it was dying down, and by the end of the year it had become history as a popular movement.[255] Although most people returned to normal Christianity after 1952, some small groups continued to live in accordance with the morally stricter principles of the *Epapudhuko*, and the remnants of these groups are said to exist even today.[256]

Kleopas Itope, who is usually credited for initiating the revival, was evidently an excellent speaker[257] but he was not the sole cause, because he preached only in

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254 Copy Superintendent V. Alho to NCO 2 Feb. 1950, Eaj, AELCIN; A. Kekki to T. Vapaavuori 14 April 1949, Eac43, AFMS, NAF; H. Ranttila to T. Vapaavuori 25 March 1951, Eac44, AFMS, NAF; Statement by Festus Stephanus (to NCO) 28 Jan. 1950, 7/3/1, NAO, NAN; Pastor Eino Johannes Itope to NCO 25 March 1950, 7/3/1, NAO, NAN.

255 See L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 11 Aug. 1952 & E.J. Pentti to T. Vapaavuori Nov. 1952, Eac45, AFMS, NAF; B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1952 (general report) & E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1952 (Uukwanyama), mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendices 1 and 26, Hha24, AFMS, NAF; Written statement of Cleopas Johannes, undated Dec. 1952, 7/3/1, NAO, NAN; NCO Quarterly Report Oct.–Dec. 1952, p. 3, 12/1, NAO, NAN; *Suomen Lähetyssanomia* 11/1952, p. 188–189 (Hynönen, Jumalan tulet palavat); Kekki, 1964, p. 33–38; Löytty, 1969, p. 364–366.

256 E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1953 (Uukwanyama), mmm 12–15 Jan. 1954, Appendix 24, Hha25; Ibid. 1954, mmm 19–20 Jan. 1955, Appendix 37a, Hha26; Ibid. 1956, mmm 9–12 Jan. 1957, Appendix 10, Hha28; E.J. Pentti's Annual Report 1955 (Western parishes), mmm 10–12 Jan. 1956, Appendix 9, Hha27. All in AFMS, NAF. Efraim Angula interviewed on 17 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga; Tomas Kalumbu interviewed on 19 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga; Kekki, 1964, p. 28; Löytty, 1969, p. 366.

257 "When I listened to his speeches in Ondobe I realized that God had amazingly opened His word to him. In a way it was quite humiliating to realize that I, even though I was white and a pastor,

Uukwanyama and Ondonga and had to leave for the south before the revival had reached its height[258] . On the other hand, Antti Kekki's role seems to have been underestimated. He, too, was an excellent speaker[259] and had an important role as an organizer during the early stages of the *Epapudhuko*. Yet even Itope and Kekki together cannot explain the spread of the revival, because after the initial stage it was in most cases spread by rank-and-file Christians, usually young people[260] .

The characteristic feature of the *Epapudhuko* was the confession of sins. Maija Kantele described the beginning of the revival at the Elim girls' school in the following way:

> "The [Uukwambi] revival began at the girls' school. One Sunday Pastor Jason from the neighbouring parish came to give a sermon... He simply told what he had experienced in Engela during the evangelization days there... In the next week I received many students [who came to confess their sins]. But that was just the beginning... One day the presiding missionary brought greetings from the revival meetings in Ontananga and Olukonda. The same evening the whole second year class were on their knees crying and praying. Sins were now understood to be sins and the girls wanted to get rid of them... The first year students were also crying, praying and reading the New Testament... [In the evening] the pupils followed me when I returned to my quarters. There was not enough time for all of them to confess their sins that night, but we continued our talks during the next few days..."[261]

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was now just like an onlooker. When Kleopas preached, the blacks listened carefully. He explained illustratively how man, after having been thrown out of paradise, is destined to go to hell unless he allows Christ to come into his life." (Kekki, 1964, p. 34) (Transl. KM) (See also McKittrick, 2002, p. 248) ** Kleopas Itope may have been an excellent speaker, but whether he was an honest one is questionable. Before he began his preaching in 1952, he told Kekki about his experiences in the Union. According to one of his stories, he once traveled by train with a friend and the white conductor asked them to the guard's van. There he offered them drinks and tried to make love to them. When Kleopas explained to the man how God had freed them from drinking and "pagan sins", he became repentant and asked them to pray for him. A little later Kleopas was again traveling by train, and at one station he saw the same conductor holding a revival meeting. (Kekki, 1964, p. 33) I doubt whether this ever happened. It is more likely that Kleopas took the story from a religious tract telling about a gay repenting of his "sin".

258 Written statement by Cleopas Johannes, undated Dec. 1952, 7/3/1, NAO, NAN; Kekki, 1964, p. 35 fn. 1. According to Kekki, Kleopas had to return to South Africa, where his brother had been murdered. He later returned to Ovamboland and continued to work as an evangelist until 1957, when he was discarded because he had abandoned his wife. (Minutes of the church administration 19 Feb. 1957 §11, Hha28, AFMS, NAF.)

259 L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 30 June 1951, Eac44, AFMS, NAF; Efraim Angula interviewed on 17 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga; Natanael Shinana interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama.

260 E.g. Efraim Angula interviewed on 17 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga; Tomas Kalumbu interviewed on 19 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga; *Suomen Lähetyssanomia* 11/1952, p. 188, 190 (Hynönen, Jumalan tulet palavat & Kantele, Me olemme kuin untanäkeväiset); Kekki, 1964, p. 36, 37; McKittrick, 1995, p. 275–276, 281, 287.

261 *Suomen Lähetyssanomia* 11/1952, p. 190. (Transl. KM)

Once the *Epapudhuko* hit a parish, there usually followed several days of long, crowded meetings with prayers and public confessions of sins[262] during the day, while pastors, missionaries and pastoral students spent hours listening to people's private confessions in the evenings and at night.[263] It was not only major sins that people confessed, but also the most insignificant and old-standing ones. Many grown people were said to have felt compelled to bring to light all their little wrongdoings from childhood.[264] But just confessing one's wrongdoings was not enough. Another, not uncommon feature of the *Epapudhuko* was the willingness of participants to undo the harm they may have caused, e.g. by returning stolen goods to their lawful owners,[265] or paying debts. Liina Lindström tells of one prominent teacher who suddenly left his work in 1952, explaining that he had suddenly realised during a revival meeting that he had debts which he ought to pay as soon as possible, and therefore decided to seek employment in the Police Zone.[266]

The second main feature of the *Epapudhuko* was people's new readiness to reject practices which were regarded as sinful. In the first place this meant that total abstinence, which the missionaries had strongly advocated, gained a temporary victory during the revival, as many participants decided to give up drinking even the rather weak traditional *omalovu* beer.[267] In some cases they also decided to give

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262 Public confessions of sins apparently had some undesirable effects. King Kambonde (Eino Johannes) of Ondonga and his headmen Festus Iputa and Paulus Itamaro claimed that public confessions of wrongdoings against other people in the presence of these people created new hostility between them. The same problem was pointed out by Selma Amutana, whom McKittrick interviewed. Antti Kekki, on the other hand, noted that people occasionally confessed their sins in such a frank manner that it endangered the morals of younger members of the congregations. (See Chief Kambonde to NCO 4 Nov. 1952 [including appendices 3 and 4 for Festus Iputa's and Paulus Itamaro's statements], 7/3/1, NAO, NAN; Kekki, 1964, p. 44; Transcript of Meredith McKittrick's interview with Selma Amutana in 1997 at Ondando, Ondonga)

263 E.g. L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 10 April and 11 Aug. 1952, Eac45, AFMS, NAF; B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1952 (general report), mmm 14–15 Jan.1953, Appendix 1, Hha24, AFMS, NAF; *Suomen Lähetyssanomia* 10/1952, p. 166 & 11/1952, p. 188 (Hynönen, Jumalan tulet palavat) & 11/1952, p. 190 (Kantele, Me olemme kuin untanäkeväiset) & 12/1952, p. 207 (extracts from pastoral students letters); Transcripts of McKittrick's interview with Taina Nakapipi at Oluteyi, Ongandjera in 1993 and with Kristofina Angula in 1997; Kekki, 1964, p. 35; McKittrick, 1995, p. 276.

264 Festus Iputa's statement, appendix 3 in Chief Kambonde to NCO 4 Nov. 1952, 7/3/1, NAO, NAN; *Suomen Lähetyssanomia* 11/1952, p. 190 & 12/1952, p. 207; Kekki, 1964, p. 34. ** One wonders whether all the people were honest when confessing their so-called sins. Take, for example, the man who confessed that he had teased a chicken as a child and now felt compelled to bring the matter into the open because the "chicken's prayers" had begun to haunt him. This sounds very much like someone who was merely responding to a social situation in which the confessing of sins was required by reporting a minor misdeed in the knowledge that it would not cause much reprobation but would give him the right to join the group of repentant "true Christians". He would win social recognition with the minimum of concessions.

265 NCO to Chief Native Commissioner 1 Dec. 1952, A266/47, SWAA, NAN; B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1952 (Southern Ondonga parishes), mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendix 3, Hha24, AFMS, NAF; *Suomen Lähetyssanomia* 12/1952, p. 207 (extracts from pastoral students' letters); McKittrick's notes of the interview with Malakia Alugongo on 19 July 1997 at Ongongo, Uukwambi; Löytty, 1969, p. 362.

266 L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 28 Nov. 1952, Eac45, AFMS, NAF.

267 E.g. Minutes of the Field Administration Board 6 Oct. 1952 § 5, Eac45, AFMS, NAF; Suomen Lähetyssanomia no. 11/1952, p. 189 (Hynönen, Jumalan tulet palavat) & no. 12/1952, p. 207 (extracts from pastoral students' letters); Johannes Kalenga interviewed on 7 Dec. 1998 at Etilyasa,

up smoking and destroyed items of traditional wealth such as *oonyoka* necklaces made of ostrich eggshell beads or other traditional ornaments.[268] It also appears that some revivalists decided not to use the traditional herbal medicines.[269]

Revival meetings were usually held in an organized manner, but not always. Occasionally emotions and actions were carried to excess, as even the missionaries admitted in a roundabout way by stating that there had been "God's revivals and the devil's 'revivals'"[270], or that revivals also brought out some negative phenomena such as "self-assertion, a condemnatory mood and mass behaviour"[271]. One set of excesses included dreams, prophecies and occasional ecstatic behaviour.[272] On the last mentioned aspect, Antti Kekki stated the following:

> "The blacks are often very emotional, and therefore it sometimes happened that when some people were crying on account of their sins [at a revival meeting], all the others would soon join in with ecstatic crying, just as is commonly done at heathen burials. When that happened, I clapped my hands loudly and then shouted as in manoeuvres: 'Stop the prayers!' It turned out to be necessary to have white workers present [at meetings] so that they could calm the situation down when emotions began running too high."[273]

Although there was obviously some excessive behaviour in all communities during the revival (Kekki's experiences must be in Uukwanyama, for example), it seems to have been more common in the western communities, particularly in Ongandjera. There are probably quite many reasons for this, but two quite obvious ones can be found in the sources. Firstly, missionary supervision, which Kekki emphasized, was practically non-existent in the west, as the only male missionary stationed outside Ondonga and Uukwanyama was Taisto Saarinen in Ombalantu, who was alone responsible for the general supervision of congregational work in Ombalantu, Ongandjera, Uukwaluudhi and Uukolonkadhi.[274] Besides him, the western communities had only a couple of women as heads of schools and a nurse. Secondly, a woman prophet emerged in Ongandjera who apparently gained a large follow-

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Ongandjera; Natanael Shinana interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama; Transcript of McKittrick's interview with Kristofina Angula in 1997; Kekki, 1964, p. 37; Löytty, 1969, p. 362–363, 367; McKittrick, 1995, p. 276, 281.

268 Transcript of McKittrick's interview with Kristofina Angula in 1997; Notes of McKittrick's interview with Titus Ngula in 1997 at Oshitayi, Ondonga; McKittrick, 1995, p. 277–278, 280, 287

269 Transcript of McKittrick's interview with Aune Negongo on 12 Aug. 1993 at Uukwalumbe, Ongandjera.

270 Copy B. Eriksson to W. Kivinen 18 Dec. 1952, Ncg, AELCIN.

271 Mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953 §10, Hha24, AFMS, NAF.

272 E.g. Chief Native Commissioner to Superintendent of the FMS 7 Jan. 1953, Eaj, AELCIN; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1952 (Uukwanyama) & T. Saarinen's Annual Report 1952 (Ombalantu), mmm 14–15 Jan.1953, Appendices 26 and 44, Hha24, AFMS, NAF; Chief Kambonde to NCO 4 Nov. 1952, 7/3/1, NAO, NAN; Johannes Kalenga interviewed on 7 Dec. 1998 at Etilyasa, Ongandjera; Transcript of McKittrick's interview with Hilma Augustus on 21 July 1997 at Oniipa, Ondonga; McKittrick, 1995, p. 279–280.

273 Kekki, 1964, p. 35. (Transl. KM)

274 T. Saarinen's Annual Report 1952 (Western communities and Ombalantu boys' school), mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendix 44, Hha24, AFMS, NAF.

ing,[275] and she seems to have been the main reason why the revival became more ecstatic and extreme there than in other communities. The situation in Ongandjera was vividly described by Johannes Kalenga, who participated in revival meetings there as a pastoral student. His narrative merits a longer quotation.

According to Kalenga, the revival was urging people to repent and to give up pagan behaviour. But "Satan was also at work during the revival" and therefore some revivalists actually destroyed the movement. He recounted that a couple of Ovambo pastors tried to tell the local people to cool down, but it did not have much effect, apparently because the leaders of the revival regarded the pastors as misleading the people. When people entered the place where a revival meeting was being held, they had to take off their shoes because the place was regarded as sacred. At the meeting there was a prophet who was said to have a direct contact with heaven, and who announced which people present had their names written "in the book of heaven" (i.e. who were to be admitted to paradise). Furthermore, the leaders of the meeting denounced marriages and sexual relations between men and women because "in heaven there is no marriage". Kalenga also said that some people did not want to leave the meetings because it was believed that only those who were in the meetings would (eventually?) go to heaven. Some stayed there for days without even eating. He also reported that revivalists would rush into non-Christians' homes and baptize people without their consent.

Not all the people were happy with the way the revivalists behaved. Kalenga said that Sylvi Kyllönen, headmistress of the Ongandjera teacher training school, once came to a meeting and ordered the trainee teachers to leave it. Some relatives of participants also wanted the women and children in particular to leave the meetings. They would go in, capture their relatives and end up in fights not only with the other revivalists but also with their own relatives who resisted their removal from the meetings.[276]

Kalenga also made a somewhat unspecified reference to gravedigging which had taken place in Ongandjera. The case was reported in more detail by King Ushona Shiimi: One day he was informed that seven people who had taught the local people in a manner contrary to the church's teachings were found digging graves for themselves. They claimed that they had received a message from God saying that the end of the world would occur that evening. The king had the gravediggers arrested and informed the Native Commissioner of the incident.[277]

One interesting thing in Kalenga's narrative is his claim that the leaders of the Ongandjera revival denounced Christian marriage. There seems to have been a similar mood in the eastern communities, where there was at least one man (possibly several) who went around preaching that Christian marriage was void and that

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275 E.g. Copy B. Eriksson to W. Kivinen 18 Dec. 1952, Ncg, AELCIN; Kekki, 1964, p. 37–38.

276 Johannes Kalenga interviewed on 7 Dec 1998 at Etilyasa, Ongandjera. (The above two paragraphs are a simplified and rearranged summary of Kalenga's torrent of narrative.)

277 Copy Chief Ushona Shimi to NCO 24 Nov. 1952, A266/47, SWAA, NAN. Löytty has another story about gravedigging. He writes that the Ngandjera prophet would sometimes predict the deaths of certain persons and ordered them to dig their graves in readiness. (Löytty, 1969, p. 366)

spouses should refrain from having sex with each other.[278] Marriage and sex were not the only things which the extreme revivalists rejected, however, as earthly wealth apparently came into the same category. Reference has already been made above to the destroying *oonyoka* necklaces and other traditional signs of wealth, and some people (at least in Ombalantu) appear to have burned their millet stocks in anticipation of the immediate end of the world.[279]

The *Epapudhuko* is slightly problematic in the sense that it does not seem to fit neatly into any category of revival movements, although it had many aspects which have been common in African Pentecostal revivals/sects: it aimed at reviving the faith, yet at the same time it was positive in proclaiming the Christian message, it had some legalistic aspects which originated from pietistic missionaries, one of its leaders was a prophet who had a strong position as a mediator between this world and the next, public confessions of sin played a prominent role, and the revivalists reacted strongly against some traditional customs which were considered to be detrimental to the Christian faith. On the other hand, some aspects of pentecostalism, such as faith-healing and adult (re)baptism, were absent.[280] Thinking of the rapid spread of the revival, the behavioural excesses during it and the quite sudden manner in which it came to an end, the most accurate term to describe it might be "a sudden outburst of mass hysteria". For our present purpose, however, it is not important to specify the *Epapudhuko* exactly but to figure out what it can tell us about the causes of conversion in the 1950s. To this end we still have to take a closer look at two aspects of it.

The first noteworthy aspect is the fact that it was a grass-root movement in which the revival message was carried by rank-and-file Christians, often young people. Also, many of the preachers were lay Christians. But that is not all. The *Epapudhuko* was, to some extent at least, an anti-establishment movement.[281] This aspect is present, for example, in Kalenga's testimony that some revivalists regarded pastors of the established church as apt to mislead people. Similarly Kekki maintained that the young, eager revivalists were sometimes too keen to criticize pastors and evangelists for their lack of faith without even knowing the people concerned. "The condemnatory mood... made some elevate themselves above others."[282] The anti-establishment character of the *Epapudhuko* can also be deduced in a reverse manner from information about which groups in particular had negative views about it. According to the missionaries, there were two groups of people who were markedly reluctant to participate in the revival: members of the Ondonga royal clan and Ovambo teachers.[283] This means that two elite groups,

278 Copy B. Eriksson to W. Kivinen 18 Dec. 1952, Ncg, AELCIN; Headman Elifas Shindondola's statement, Appendix 2 in Chief Kambonde to NCO 4 Nov. 1952, 7/3/1, NAO, NAN.

279 McKittrick, 1995, p. 280.

280 For a typology of revival movements/Christian sects, see Oosthuizen, 1968, p. 72–74.

281 C.f. McKittrick, 1995, p. 278, 287–289 and McKittrick, 2002, p. 247, 249–253, 259.

282 Kekki, 1964, p. 37.

283 L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 11 Aug. 1952, Eac45; B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1952 (Southern Ondonga) & L. Lindström's Annual Report 1952 (Schools) & E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1952 (Uukwanyama), mmm 14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendices 3, 19 and 26, Hha24. All in AFMS, NAF;

one traditional and one new, were not keen to join the revival, apparently because they regarded it as a threat to their social position.

The readiness of the rank-and-file Christians to adopt an active role in the revival, and also their readiness to criticize the mission-created elite of the church, should both be taken as signs of the time, showing that Ovambo Christians now regarded the church indeed as "their own", that it was an African church and therefore they no longer had to remain passive. The fact that no secessionist African church emerged in Ovamboland also speaks for this interpretation. As already pointed out, the idea that there was now an Africanized church probably made it easier for non-Christians to join it.

The second interesting feature of the *Epapudhuko* is the apparent fear of the end of the world manifested in it, of which the Ongandjera gravedigging episode is the most obvious example. The relevant question now is whether such fears were also common outside Ongandjera. According to Native Commissioner Eedes' information they were, for he reported towards the end of 1952 that revivalists were preaching that the world was coming to an end.[284] McKittrick, on the other hand, suggests that such fears probably existed only in Ongandjera.[285] It would nevertheless seem, on several indications, that people all over Ovamboland had these fears. Firstly, the end of the world was a constant theme in revivalists' sermons in Ondonga and Uukwanyama too, although it is not certain whether it was commonly claimed to be imminent.[286] Some people obviously believed in an imminent end, like the pupils at the Uukwaluudhi girls' school who left school in order to save other people's souls while there still was time before the second coming.[287] There were also some people in Ondonga who were carried away with the same mood:

> "There were a few people who expected the Lord to come very soon. They would not go home and thought that there was no need to eat or to work because the Lord was coming. That was childish."[288]

Suomen Lähetyssanomia 2/1954, p. 27 & 4/1954, p. 69 (Kivinen, Mustaa ja valkoista & Kekki, Terveisiä Ambomaalta); Löytty, 1969, p. 363.

284 NCO to Chief Native Commissioner 1 Dec. 1952, A266/47, SWAA, NAN. (Copy in 7/3/1, NAO, NAN)

285 She refers to Eedes' letter and assumes that he may simply have taken the example of Ongandjera and applied it generally. Her Mbalantu informants did not mention that such preaching had taken place in their community. (See McKittrick, 1995, p. 281 fn 44).

286 Rakel Nailenge, interviewed on 30 Nov. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama; Titus Ngula, interviewed on 19 Nov. 1998 at Oshitayi, Ondonga; Natanael Shinana, interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama. (According to all three, the revivalists claimed that the second coming was imminent.)

287 K. Hatakka's Annual Report 1952 (Uukwaluudhi girls' school), mmm14–15 Jan. 1953, Appendix 46, Hha24, AFMS, NAF.

288 Efraim Angula, interviewed on 17 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga. (The quotation is my translation from Dean Shivute's Finnish translation.) A very similar statement was also made by Rev. Natanael Shinana, whom I interviewed in Uukwanyama.

Secondly, the fear of the end of the world was apparently not caused by anything that happened in Ongandjera during the *Epapudhuko*, because it seems to have already existed before the revival. This is indicated by a letter from an unnamed Ovambo to somebody in the Police Zone that was intercepted by the authorities. According to the translation, the writer says:

> "[T]here is some news from south saying that Germany now belongs to Russians, and all the countries of Israel are overcrowded with people. Ever since Germany has been taken over by the Russians, there is now a law that they don't want anybody to work for God. So all ministers and teachers of congregations are being persecuted, and even in Jerusalem no more Christmas trees are allowed and children are all forbidden to sing hymns. Different kind of meetings are being held."[289]

It seems that this person was afraid that Armageddon was near. Finally, people in various communities were keen to return stolen goods to their rightful owners. It is questionable whether they did this just because they suddenly became convinced that stealing *per se* was wrong. It is more likely that they wanted to remedy their wrongdoings before the approaching judgement day.

Alongside the fear of the end of the world there was obviously also a fear of hell. At least the revivalists did their best to promote this fear, because the terrible fate of sinners in hell seem to have been a constant theme in their preaching.[290] The presence of fears as an undercurrent phenomenon in the *Epapudhuko* indicates that people were now beginning to react to the preaching about sin and punishment which both the missionaries and the Ovambo pastors had kept up for decades.[291] But why did people begin to take such threats seriously in the early 1950s? Why did they begin to fear the end of the world and the scourge of hell?

Meredith McKittrick may have found an answer to the above questions. She points out that the time before the *Epapudhuko* was a economically difficult one:

> "[T]he timing of the movement cannot be ignored. Epapudhuko arose after four years of partial crop failure and one year of almost complete crop failure, and in the context of growing land scarcity. It gathered steam as people were waiting for the rains."[292]

McKittrick thus sees the *Epapudhuko* as the outcome of a continuous subsistence crisis which began with the crop failure of 1948. Her argument is logical, although

289 Copy Chief Native Commissioner to NCO 10 Sept. 1950, A266/47, SWAA. (The letter quoted was dated on the 24 April 1950)

290 Natanael Shinana interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama; Written stement by Cleopas Johannes, undated Dec. 1952, 7/3/1, NAO, NAN;Kekki, 1964, p. 34–35; Löytty, 1969, 365, 367.

291 Chapter "... and by what means".

292 McKittrick, 1995, p. 291. (See also McKittrick, 2002, p. 257–258) McKittrick's information on harvests in 1948–1954 (1995, p. 230) is confirmed by the presiding missionary's annual reports. There were indeed partial crop failures from 1948 onwards, and 1950 and 1951 were particularly difficult years.

the subsistence crisis seems to have begun before 1948.[293] Anyway, we now have two simultaneous phenomena: a long-standing subsistence crisis which increased stress among the people, and preachers who were emphasizing that God is keen to punish sinners. Christians may well have taken the continuous hardship as a proof that they were indeed being punished for their sins. After a particularly difficult year this belief then led to an outbreak of mass hysteria in the form of the revival. Non-Christians, of whom some participated in revival activities, may well have taken the same situation as proof that the Christian God was punishing them for not having converted. Here we must remember that it was not only missionary Lutheranism that was legalistic, but also the original Ovambo religion. It was important to keep the ancestral spirits satisfied in order not to face difficulties. It may be that by now many non-Christians had adopted some ideas concerning the Christian God from the ever increasing number of Christians around them, and that they now imagined this God as a kind of superior ancestral spirit. The hardships at the turn of the 1950s proved that they had angered this spirit and now it had to be appeased.

With some sarcasm one could claim that the *Epapudhuko* and the second wave of conversions seem partly to have resulted from a combination of unfavourable climatic conditions, a scare campaign and the legalistic religious tradition. This obviously leaves us with the possibility that the "famine theory" might have some validity in this instance. But here, too, the idea is based only on logic, because no actual proof can be found to connect the subsistence crisis with the religious fervour. It is also interesting that if there was a connection between these two, then the modified J-curve theory is obviously not valid in the case of the second conversion wave, because the drive towards conversion seems to have begun during the deprivation period and not after it. On the other hand, it is equally obvious that Davies' original J-curve this time provides tools which may help us to understand the conversions, in that the revolution (the revival and peak in conversions) emerged when the continuous subsistence crisis made the gap between the actual and expected satisfaction of people's needs intolerable. Therefore, as in the early 1920s, it was people's disappointment that made them convert.

It is also interesting, however, that it is not only the "famine theory" which may explain something about the conversions in the 1950s, but also the explanation involving the "influence of the colonial administration". At the beginning of 1952, just before the *Epapudhuko* broke out, the presiding missionary, Viktor Alho, stated in his annual report for 1951 that:

> "The particular time when God's call is being heard has now arrived in Ovamboland. [Alho uses Finnish word *etsikkoaika*, "time of searching",to describe the situation.] This may partly be a result of the fact that the Government is now publicly cooperating with the mission by inspecting and financially supporting our schools. Therefore, even the native assistants of the Gov-

293 An almost total crop failure also occurred in 1946, and in Alho's opinion, Ovamboland would have faced a devastating famine if the government had not brought in relief grain. The pre-1946 harvests had similarly been poor. (See V. Alho's Annual Report 1946 [general report], mmm 22–23 Jan. 1947, Appendix 1, Hha21, AFMS, NAF.)

> ernment dare not speak evil of the mission in the same way as they did, say, ten years ago."[294]

Thus Alho claims that the increased interest in Christianity, or at least part of it, was caused by the fact that the colonial administration was now publicly supporting the mission. His words "ten years ago" refer to the time when C. H. L. Hahn was still the native commissioner and relations between colonial officials and missionaries were often strained. "Cocky" Hahn retired in 1947 and was succeeded by Harold Eedes. During his time in office the relationship between the mission and the administration improved markedly. It is quite possible, even probable, that ordinary people also noticed these signs of improved relations and drew their own conclusions from them. From the non-Christians' point of view this meant that it was now acceptable, or even wise, to seek one's way to the Christian faith because the true rulers of the country were on good terms with the representatives of that religion. It is not too far-fetched to assume that non-Christians in the 1950s might have based their affiliation decisions on their view of what the colonial administration's attitude to Christianity or the missionaries was. Even Christians seem to have paid attention to this, as a piece of information provided by W. H. Olivier, the Assistant Native Commissioner stationed in Uukwanyama, indicates. He wrote soon after the *Epapudhuko* that "[a]n amazing report seems to indicate that the preacher's [Kleopas Iitope's] initial success was due to the belief amongst certain people that he was sponsored by the government because he condemned the drinking of beer".[295]

When summing up the second wave of conversions, one must emphasize that it obviously had very many causes. The foundation was provided by the demographic cause, i.e. the rapid increase in population, which also increased the pool of non-Christian potential converts, and overlying this were factors which made conversion easier. Proselytism in Ovamboland was not only intensified after World War II, but it had also been Africanized. This meant that the message could be taken even to the most remote areas. It also meant that the message was more easily understood, because the intercessor and the receiver were people of the same cultural background. The Africanization of proselytism also made conversions easier because it showed the potential converts that they could now join an African church instead of one led by Europeans. Finally, there were factors which made conversion more desirable. Firstly there was the belief among non-Christians that, unlike the earlier situation, the colonial administration was now in favour of people becoming Christians. Then there was a growing belief that being Christian and being civilized were the same thing, a belief also appears to have emerged that conversion might be a way to avoid the wrath of the Christian God as manifested by the worsening subsistence crisis during the first decade after the war.

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294 V. Alho's Annual Report 1951 (general report), mmm 24–25 Jan. 1952, unnumbered appendix, Hha23, AFMS, NAF. (Transl. KM)

295 Assistant Native Commissioner's (Oshikango) report for the quarter ended 31 Dec. 1952, p. 2, 12/1, NAO, NAN.

The role of material aims and social relations in conversion

The missionary Erkki Lehto wrote to the FMS in Helsinki in 1934 explaining that for some two decades he had been asking both teachers and ordinary Ovambo Christians about the reasons which had led people to convert and presented the following statistics based on his findings:

Influenced by sermons	1%
Influenced by hymns (not by the words but by the melody)	22%
Feared sickness or death	12%
Because of a desire for knowledge	4%
Encouraged by another person	4%
Followed a friend or relative	10%
Followed a group	15%
For some material reason or out of vanity	32%[296]

This list indicates that the motives for conversion were seldom purely spiritual ones. On the contrary, in one third of cases conversion had allegedly taken place for material or practical reasons. What were these material motives?

It has quite often been suggested in earlier research that during the early stages of missionizing the Africans often were drawn to the missionaries by their desire for material rewards, e.g. European goods provided by them or labour opportunities at the mission stations.[297] Some scholars have also suggested that the situation among the Ovambo in the 19th century was similar, and that a number of potential converts associated with the missionaries in the hope of gaining access to goods or land.[298] Without having read the missionary documents of that time, I would suggest that such an interpretation may well have a fair share of truth in it. It is quite natural that people should have identified the missionaries with non-indigenous goods, because during their first years in Ovamboland they did indeed participate in trading and people who did not belong to the elite also had access to some foreign goods through them.[299] This identification was further emphasised when the first Ovambo were baptised, because the missionaries provided their new Christians with certain goods, particularly clothes, which were needed for decent Christian living. The Christians soon took it for granted that the missionaries would keep them clothed, and with the increasing number of Christians, clothing soon became a considerable financial burden on the mission.[300]

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296 [Lehto, Erkki], Vieläkin ambolähetyksemme saarna- ja koulutoiminnasta (s.d. 1934). Hha12, AFMS, NAF.

297 See e.g. Etherington, 1977, p. 35; Beidelman, 1982, p. 66, 69; Simensen, 1987, p. 90–91, 94–95; Carmody, 1988, p. 196, 203–204; Uka, 1989, p. 146; Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 309–310; Luig, 1997, p. 126, 138.

298 Clarence-Smith & Moorsom, 1975, p. 376–377; Moorsom, 1977, p. 35; Gordon, 1978, p. 285; Strassegger, 1988, p. 77; McKittrick, 1995, p. 20, 74, 117–118; McKittrick, 1998, p. 245, 249; McKittrick, 2002, p. 100–101.

299 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 128–131; McKittrick, 2002, p. 101.

300 See Peltola, 1958, p. 118–121, 164–165.

The relevant question now is whether the desire to gain direct access to material rewards can explain religious affiliation in the twentieth century as well. There are some pieces of information which indicate that in certain circumstances there may have been a link between material aims and association with missionaries. The idea that missionaries were a source of goods seems to have prevailed quite generally in the 1910s, as the assistant mission director, Hannu Haahti, summarized the situation after his inspection visit to Ovamboland in 1912 in the following way:

> "The Ovambo believe that missionaries are very rich. It is generally believed that they only have to write to Finland or to the Germans in order to get as much in the way of goods as they want. People do not believe the missionaries when they try to rectify this misunderstanding. If they refuse to help, or demand payment for goods like medicines or clothes, the Africans accuse them of unchristian stinginess..."[301]

Many missionaries also expressed views that local Africans at this time expected the missionaries to provide them with goods, and that some of their fellow missionaries were far too keen to make a reputation as nice people by freely distributing goods to Africans.[302]

The fact that the Ovambo indeed regarded missionaries as a source of goods in the 1910s is most clearly manifested in reports from Uukwambi, where the local missionaries wrote that the majority of visitors came to the mission station to beg. If they were given something they came to prayer meetings "out of politeness", but if they were given nothing they became angry. In some cases people first registered themselves as pupils at the mission schools and then immediately after that came to the mission station to ask for food or goods.[303] The Kwambi, however, were still able to link material aspirations with religious affiliation in the 1930s, because their community had two rival denominations, i.e. the Lutherans and the Catholics. Thus during the famine in 1930 some Lutheran Kwambi apparently switched to Catholicism because the RC mission, unlike the Lutheran one, was able to provide them with grain. In the mid-1930s some more Lutherans, apparently very poor people, went over to the Catholics because the RC mission gave its adherents clothes and other goods for free.[304] A desire to gain access to goods by associating

301 Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 25. Lb, AELCIN. (Transl. KM)

302 See e.g. E. Liljeblad to J. Mustakallio 20 Sept. 1912, Eac17; A. Glad to H. Haahti 29 Sept. 1913, Eac18; E. Liljeblad to S. Mustakallio 30 Jan. 1913, Eac18; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 29 May 1917, Eac20; A. Glad to M. Tarkkanen 10 May 1917, Eac20; A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 26 Nov. 1917, Eac20; S. and A. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 4 April 1918, Eac21; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 24 May 1926, Eac26. All in AFMS, NAF.

303 H. Koivu to J. Mustakallio 18 Aug. 1910, Eac16; K. Koivu to H. Haahti 4 Jan. 1911, Eac16; E. Lehto to J. Mustakallio (late 1911 or early 1912), Eac17. All in AFMS, NAF.

304 O, Aho's Annual Report 1930 (Elim), mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 28, Hha11; Viktor Alho, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista Ambomaalla 1933 (Elim parish inspection), Hha12; H. Saari's Annual Report 1933 (Elim), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1934, Appendix 23, Hha12; H. Saari's Annual Report 1934 (Elim), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 31, Hha13. All in AFMS, NAF.

with missionaries may also have existed in other western communities in the 1930s, for the missionary Vapaavuori reported from Ombalantu in 1934 that the RC mission had obtained new converts by freely giving away hoes and clothes, which were in short supply in the community. A couple of McKittrick's Ngandjera informants also claimed that people there saw the missionaries as a means of gaining access to European goods or even money.[305]

It should be noted that all the above post-1910s reports by missionaries concerning people's desire to seek contact with them in order to gain access to goods are from the late 1920s and the early 1930s. This was a time of economic hardship. There was a famine at that time in Ovamboland, and the great depression closed the mines and industries in the Police Zone, practically bringing all labour recruitment to an end from 1931 to 1935[306] . It is therefore quite probable that people's desire to seek goods by associating with missionaries at that particular time was caused by the unusual economic situation, whereas at normal times the missionaries' goods would obviously have been far less important or tempting.

Thinking of the situation in Ovamboland as a whole, I do not believe that the desire to gain direct access to non-indigenous goods could have been a generally prevailing reason for conversions after the 1910s, at least not as far as conversion to Lutheranism was concerned. There are several reasons which make it improbable: 1) Except during the depression period, the emergence of labour migration gave at least some of the Ovambo a new way of gaining access to European goods. This made the missionaries less important as a potential source of such goods. 2) Although the missionaries occasionally complained even after the 1910s that the Africans were more interested in their goods than in their words, such comments were quite infrequent, i.e. they clearly regarded the Africans' materialistic aims as less of a problem. 3) As more people began converting in the 1920s, the missionaries were no longer able to support the Christians materially to the same extent as before, and potential converts must have realised this in due course. 4) Even if the missionaries had been able to continue to distribute goods to Christians, they were no longer willing to do so. From the beginning of their work they had always had a distant vision of self-supporting Ovambo congregations financed by the African Christians themselves, and certain steps towards this goal were taken at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1903, for example, the Board of Directors decided that Africans should normally pay for any goods they received from missionaries, and goods could be given without charge only in exceptional circumstances. Later, in 1911, the missionaries discussed how they should react to begging Africans. Different views were expressed, but it was generally agreed that begging should be discouraged and that Africans should normally pay for anything they received from missionaries. The process culminated in the introduction of obligatory annual parish fees in 1919.[307] The main aim of this was to improve the financial situation of

305 T. Vapaavuori's Annual Report 1934 (Ombalantu), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 39, Hha13, AFMS, NAF; McKittrick, 1995, p. 117.

306 E.g. Notkola & Siiskonen, 2000, table 10.8, p.157–158.

307 Mmm 20–22 Sept. 1911 §3, 5 and 8 (including appendices), Hha6; Mmm 24 Feb. 1919 § 3, Hha7. Both in AFMS, NAF; Peltola, 1958, p. 211;Varis, 1988, p. 117.

the congregations, but they also had a secondary aim of discouraging conversion for material reasons[308] . Thus from that point onwards conversion did not promise any obvious material rewards, but instead entailed financial obligations.

There is also an alternative material-practical-social explanation for the conversions, the claim that the Africans' wish to associate with missionaries, and possibly to adopt Christianity, was not necessarily motivated by a desire for immediate access to material rewards, but by the hope of obtaining something, such as a European-style education, which would improve their possibilities in the European-led economic sector or their social standing within their own communities.[309] A somewhat similar explanation has been suggested in the case of Ovambo conversions (or association with missionaries), first by Robert Gordon[310] and more recently by Meredith McKittrick. The latter emphasizes that Ovambo societies disadvantaged young people in many ways, and therefore they looked for new ideas and systems of authority which might hold the promise of increased social status and economic wealth. Engagement in migrant labour and adherence to Christianity were seen by young people as such alternative ways to economic security and social networks which the Ovambo socio-economic system denied them.[311]

Although it is impossible to say anything conclusive from the missionary documents about whether an indirect desire to gain wealth or social status was a major motive for conversions, a few comments can be made. If we assume that Lehto's list of the reasons for conversion is approximately correct and accept the idea that the desire to gain direct access to goods by converting is an improbable explanation, then the indirect material reasons seem an obvious alternative. But it is not probable that particularly many people would have converted in the hope of increasing their wealth or social status by becoming mission employees such as teachers. With the increased number of conversions, such a career would have been possible for relatively few Christians. Furthermore, even though being a teacher could make one a respected person within the Christian community[312] , it was not a way to riches, because the teachers' salaries were quite poor up to World War II.[313] It is therefore hard to believe that anybody looking for quick cash would have taken up the teaching profession. It is more probable that for most pre-war teachers teaching was a vocation, as several missionaries argued,[314] or possibly a means of boost-

308 Mmm 24 Feb. 1919 §3, Appendix 2, Hha7, AFMS, NAF; Varis, 1988, p. 126.

309 See e.g. Ekechi, 1971, 107, 110; Beidelman, 1974, p. 245; Beidelman, 1982, 12, 59, 69; Carmody, 1988, p. 196–198, 203–205; Luig, 1997, p. 125–127, 131–132, 137–138.

310 Gordon, 1978, p. 285.

311 McKittrick, 1995, p. 116–118, 130–131; McKittrick, 1998, 244–245, 248–249; McKittrick, 2002, p. 83, 110–111, 171.

312 See chapter "... and the changing status of the traditional elite."

313 A qualified teacher's monthly salary in Uukwanyama in 1926 was something around 8 shillings in cash, whereas Africans' monthly salaries in the Police Zone, according to Alho, varied between 16 and 60 shillings. Even in 1948 Liina Lindström, the chief school inspector, stated that so far teachers' salaries had been paltry (V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 22 Oct. 1926 and A. Hänninen to M. Tarkkanen 12 July 1926, Eac26; L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 7 March 1948, Eac43. All in AFMS, NAF.)

314 E.g. A. Hänninen's Annual Report (Uukwanyama) 1920, mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 14c, Hha8; J. Syrjä's Annual Report 1932 (Uukwanyama schools) & O. Suikkanen's Annual Report 1932

ing one's social status. After the war things changed, and the salary became a more important motive for a teaching career, as indicated, for example, by the fact that from the early 1940s onwards very few men were interested in becoming teachers. It was reported that men preferred migrant labour, because the salaries were better. Men became interested in the teaching profession again only after teachers' salaries had been raised as a result of the increased government grants.[315] Thus material aims were now clearly a motive when deciding on a career in a service of the mission.

Material and practical aims also seem to have played a part when Christian men were deciding whether or not to participate in the formal education provided by the mission. Quite often they decided against it. After World War II the missionaries frequently had to note that young men's school attendance was very poor because hundreds of under-age boys were going to south to work, since they valued paid labour more than formal education.[316] If teenage boys and young men came into contact with the educational activities of the mission, they did not necessarily do so because they wanted religious tuition, but rather because they wanted to learn something useful. This was seen, for example, in the congregational youth clubs. Only a few Christian youths came to meetings when the clubs concentrated exclusively on religious teaching, and interest increased only when "practical subjects" were added to the curriculum.[317] As far as schools were concerned, young men seem to have been interested in learning foreign languages, English in particular. A lady missionary, Selma Markkanen, was already teaching English to a group of eager Kwaluudhi men in the early 1930s, while after the war a large number of Lutheran youths in Uukwanyama switched to Anglican schools because no English was taught in the FMS schools. In both cases the missionaries reported that men wanted to learn English in order to improve their possibilities in the labour market.[318]

(Ongandjera), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendices 15 & 23, Hha12; W. Björklund's Annual Report 1933 (Onayena), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1934, Appendix 33, Hha12; S. Hirvonen's Annual Report (Uukwanyama schools), mmm 21–22 Jan. 1942, Appendix 24, Hha19. S. Hirvonen's Annual Report 1946 (Uukwanyama schools), mmm 22–23 Jan. 1947, Appendix 19, Hha21. All in AFMS, NAF.

315 B. Eriksson to U. Paunu 2 Feb. 1941, Eac40; S. Hirvonen's Annual Report 1945 (Uukwanyama schools), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1946, Appendix18, Hha20; L. Lindström's Annual Report 1947 (Schools), mmm 8–9 Jan. 1948, Appendix 3, Hha21; Ibid. 1948, mmm 12–13 Jan. 1949, Appendix 4, Hha21; Ibid. 1950, mmm 24–25 Jan. 1951, Appendix 14, Hha22. All in AFMS, NAF.

316 E.g. S. Aarni's Annual Report 1945 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1946, Appendix 29, Hha20; L. Lindström's Annual Report 1949 (Schools) & J. Hopeasalmi's Annual Report 1949 (Engela boys' school) , mmm 25–26 Jan. 1950, Appendices 2 & 35, Hha22; L. Lindström's Annual Report 1957 (Schools), mmm 14–17 Jan. 1958, Appendix 3, Hha29. All in AFMS, NAF. Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani.... 20 kesäkuuta – 20 joulukuuta 1954, p. 81, Dga, AELCIN.

317 H. Saari's Annual Report 1937 (Oshigambo & Oshitayi), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1938, Appendix 13, Hha16 & W. Kivinen's Annual Report 1954 (Onayena), mmm 19–20 Jan. 1955, Appendix 23, Hha26, AFMS, NAF.

318 S. Markkanen to M. Tarkkanen 26 Aug. 1928, 31 Oct. 1929, 14 June 1930 and 31 Oct. 1932, Eac28–31; A.W. Björklund to U. Paunu 21 March 1946, Eac41; Copy V. Alho's circular to missionaries 10 July 1947, Eac42; B. Eriksson to T. Vapaavuori 28 Nov. 1947, Eac42; Copy L. Lindström to V. Alho 16 July 1947, Eac42. All in AFMS, NAF. On the desire to learn foreign languages, see also S. Teittinen's Annual Report 1932 (Elim), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendix 22 & E. Lehto's Annual Report 1933 (Oniipa), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1934, Appendix 35, Hha12, AFMS, NAF.

The attitude of Christian men to mission schools thus seems to have been somewhat utilitarian. But what about the non-Christians? Did they attend schools only in order to be baptised, or did they have practical aims as well? Very little can be said about this. For most non-Christians, becoming Christian was apparently the primary motive for attend school, but there is also some information which might suggest that this was not always the case. Let us take Kwambi pupils, for example. In 1933 there were some 1,000 non-Christian pupils regularly attending Uukwambi schools[319] and the total number of conversions in Uukwambi from 1934 to 1940 was also around one thousand. If the group of regular non-Christian pupils in 1933 had continued to attend regularly, and their motive was to seek baptism, they would all have been baptised in a far shorter time than seven years. This means that quite a few of those pupils either ceased attending regularly or even dropped out, or remained regular but were not baptised. In the latter case they were at school not because they wanted to become Christians but because they wanted to learn something which they regarded as secularly useful. Another piece of information which makes one speculate on this topic is from Uukwaluudhi in the 1930s, where according to the local teacher's reports, it was not at all unusual for some 3rd or 4th-year female pupils at the Tsandi station school to be baptised when their class-mates were being confirmed.[320] This means that some girls were only baptised when they had reached the highest level of education that was available for girls in their community at the time (which included secular subjects). Their late baptism cannot have been caused by their inability to learn enough about the Christian faith to be baptised, because in such a case they would not have been admitted to final years of study. Instead, their late baptism appears to indicate that they, or more probably their parents, regarded formal education as more valuable, or less unacceptable, than conversion.[321]

What has been said above actually tells us nothing about whether conversions were motivated by indirect material or practical aims. What it does tell us, however, is that the possible existence of such aims cannot be excluded out of hand. There seems to have been, to some extent at least, a practically oriented approach among the population, and therefore it is possible that some people indeed sought contacts with missionaries and their religion in order to obtain something that was valuable in the non-religious sense.

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319 S. Teittinen's Annual Report 1933 (Uukwambi schools), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1934, Appendix 25, Hha12, AFMS, NAF.

320 S. Markkanen's Annual Reports 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933 and 1934 (Uukwaluudhi schools), mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 34 & mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 43 & mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendix 26 & mmm 17–18 Jan. 1934, Appendix 29 & mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 37, Hha11–13, AFMS, NAF.

321 It is impossible to say why these girls' baptism took place at such a late stage in their education without knowing anything about the girls in question. It may be that they themselves were attending school in order to be baptized but their parents would allow baptism only after ohango. If this is correct, then the situation would show that from the non-Christian parents' point of view it was acceptable for their daughters to acquire knowledge and skills through formal education but unacceptable for them to change their religious affiliation before initiation.

If we now return to Lehto's list, we may note that it emphasizes the role of social relations and peer pressure as mechanisms leading to conversion. Almost 30 per cent of his converts had become Christians as a consequence of personal persuasion or group behaviour. Social relations were an important but not in every respect perfect way of spreading the message: "Christian leaven has mostly been spread by private individuals, but it has often gain extremely odd colours in the process"[322], Lehto told the mission director. Thus, although the missionaries and the Ovambo Christians had some tendencies to isolate Christians from non-Christians, isolationism was not taken so far that it would have prevented Christians from spreading the word by personal contacts.

The personal contacts which led to conversion can for the present purpose be divided into two categories: contacts between Christians and non-Christians which were not based on kinship or peer groups, and those that were. The contacts in the first category were partly organized, ordered from above. When the congregations were still small, it was the duty of reliable Christians to get in touch with heathens and try to proselytize among them. In Ombalantu in 1932, for example, 22 "ardent" Christian men were sent in pairs to visit non-Christians and to speak to them about the new faith. Their activities were said to have yielded positive results, as also did preaching tours by Tsandi girls' school pupils in Uukwaluudhi in the 1940s.[323] On the other hand, attempts to send rank-and-file Christians to preach to heathens seem to have been less successful in Oshigambo and Ongandjera, in the latter case apparently because most Christians were rather reluctant to do this.[324] Teachers and pastors were also obliged to go round preaching the word, but they could do so only in addition to their other duties. Therefore, the emergence of trained Ovambo evangelists in the 1940s obviously increased the frequency of organized proselytizing contacts with non-Christians.

As I pointed out earlier, the missionaries were satisfied with the evangelists' work, which was said to have brought in many new converts. This would indicate that organized personal contacts played a role in the conversions. Their role must not be exaggerated, however, for they could fail to yield results, as the vague examples of Oshigambo and Ongandjera show. A similar potential for either success or failure is also evident in the conflicting views presented by two of my informants. Rev. Shinana stressed that ordinary Christians voluntarily contacted non-Christians, and that their efforts in some cases brought whole districts to Christianity, whereas Rev. Kaukondi claimed that Christians' attempts to convert them often just irritated non-Christians.[325] The outcome of personal contacts apparently

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322 E. Lehto to K.A. Paasio 7 Aug. 1934, Hha12, AFMS, NAF.

323 T. Vapaavuori's Annual Report 1932 (Ombalantu), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendix 28, Hha12; Ibid. 1934, mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 39, Hha13; S. Aarni's Annual Report 1940 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 22–23 Jan. 1941, Appendix 36, Hha19; Ibid. 1941, mmm 21–22 Jan. 1942, Appendix 38, Hha19. All in AFMS, NAF.

324 N. Väänänen's Annual Report 1917 (Ongandjera), mmm 15 Jan. 1918, Appendix 16; K. Petäjä's Annual Report 1918 (Oshigambo), mmm 24 Feb. 1919, Appendix 11. Both in Hha7, AFMS, NAF.

325 Frans Kaukondi, interviewed on 7 Dec. 1998 at Onemanya, Ongandjera; Natanael Shinana, interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama.

depended on the atmosphere in which the contacts took place and on the Christians' attitudes to the non-Christians. Rev. Kalenga's experiences are a good example of this. He developed his first ideas of becoming a Christian when he was in touch with a friendly teacher who worked in his neighbourhood. But then this teacher was transferred to Ondonga and was replaced by another "very cruel" teacher who "did not treat people as a Christian should". Kalenga's interest in conversion was dispelled, and re-emerged only when the second teacher was replaced with a third, who was again a friendly one.[326]

It is naturally impossible to measure quantitatively the importance of social relations for conversions, but it can be said that contacts within kinship and peer groups apparently played an important role. It seems that Christian children and young people could quite often plant the idea of becoming Christian into the minds of their non-Christian parents or other older relatives. The missionaries' documents contain several references which show that they firmly believed in the power of young Christians to bring older members of their kin to Christianity,[327] and several of McKittricks's female informants told her that they had joined the church at the behest of their children, while Rev. Shinana told me that his old aunt became a Christian as a consequence of persistent persuasion by him and other younger Christian relatives.[328] The role of peer group relations is evident, for example, in the case of eight young men who were baptised together in Uukwambi in 1919. Five of them were said to have been "wrenched away from heathenism by their Christian friends".[329] It may be that some of these five had got the idea of becoming Christian while they were herding cattle with Christians of the same age, because the situation of Christian and non-Christian boys living together at cattle posts is known to have aroused the first ideas of conversion in some cases. At least two future pastors, Nabot Manasse and Efraim Angula, first learned about the Christian faith when they were herding cattle with Christians. As one of these Christian shepherds, Rev. Shinana recalled that the saying of evening prayers and singing of hymns by him and other Christian boys at the cattle posts obviously had an influence on the non-Christian ones.[330]

326 Johannes Kalenga, interviewed on 7 Dec. 1998 at Etilyasa, Ongandjera.

327 H. Ranttila to T. Vapaavuori 25 March 1951, Eac44; M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1913 (general report), mmm 15 Jan. 1914, Appendix 1, Hha7; K. Koivu's Annual Report 1916 (Uukwambi), mmm 17 Jan. 1917, Appendix 31, Hha7; E. Rantamäki's Annual Report 1926 (Onayena schools), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appendix 12, Hha9; Lehto, Erkki, Mitä voitaisiin tehdä pakanoiden saavuttamiseksi [what could be done to reach heathens], mmm 31 Aug. 1937 § 27, Appendix 12.1, Hha15. All in AFMS, NAF.

328 Natanael Shinana, interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama; McKittrick, 1995, p. 165, fn. 70; McKittrick, 2002, p. 239 endnote 2.

329 S. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 14 Sept. 1919, Eac21, AFMS, NAF. Meredith McKittrick's findings also confirm the role of peer groups: "But informants also reported going to church simply because their friends were doing it, and in its initial years, Christianity seems to have been spread by a network of young labourers and children of both sexes." (McKittrick, 1995, p. 118.) On the importance of peer pressure in conversions, see also McKittrick, 2002, p. 115–117.

330 J. Hopeasalmi to M. Tarkkanen 16 March 1933, Eac31, AFMS, NAF; Efraim Angula, interviewed on 17 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga; Natanael Shinana, interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama. See also McKittrick, 2002, p. 116.

Contacts within a kinship did not always lead to chistianization, however. When a senior person was strongly against the idea of a subordinate's conversion, he or she could often either forbid, or at least seriously hamper, attempts to be baptised. Such a negative effect of kinship relations is evident in many parents' fierce fight against the desires of their children, particularly girls to become Christians. This aspect is discussed in detail later.

There is one further social aspect of conversions that must be discussed, namely the conflicts between established social practices and the missionaries' demands on converts and Christians. The conflict between Ovambo polygamy and the missionaries' demand for monogamous marriages may be taken as an example, since such demand has often been seen as a hindrance to the spread of Christianity in Africa[331] .

When a polygynous Ovambo man began considering the possibility of becoming Christian, he had to compare the benefits of two contrasting systems. On the one hand there were missionaries offering a new system of beliefs, and at the same time demanding the dissolution of polygynous unions,[332] and on the other hand there was the system of polygyny with its economic benefits (to the polygynous men anyway[333]) and with its role as the indicator of social status, as a man with several wives was considered to be wealthy and of high rank.[334] But it was not only

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331 Concerning the demand for monogamy and christianization in Africa in general, see e.g. Isichei, 1995, p. 96, 159, 239–240, 268; Peil & Oyeneye, 1998, p. 106–107; Examples from mission fields see e.g. Wright, 1971, p. 106, 132; Peel, 1977, p. 130; Luig, 1997, p. 136–137.

332 The Finnish missionaries had rejected polygyny from the very beginning. Polygynous men, or their wives, were not baptized. In the early 1910s they appear to have had a short, strange period of greater toleration in this respect, when the baptism of people living in polygamous unions was allowed in some rare cases if the people "had grown old together and could not be separated". It appears that some polygamous persons were actually baptized at that time. The tolerance came to an end some time in the late 1910s, however, and the first church regulations of 1924 were again inflexible, insisting that a polygynous man had to renounce polygyny before baptism, while the wife of polygynous man had to part from her husband, or else he had to agree to refrain from polygyny. (V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 3 Feb. 1920 Eac22; Mmm27 Nov. 1911 §16 and Appendix 11, Hha6; E. Liljeblad to the board of directors of the FMS 3 April 1913, mmm 2 April 1913, Appendix 2, Hha6; Mmm 13 Jan. 1920, Appendix 12, Hha8; Ambomaan evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon järjestyssäännöt 1924 §38, Hhc2. All in AFMS, NAF. See also Tuupainen, 1970, p. 105–106.)

333 The colonial administration and missionaries had very different opinions about whether monogamous or polygamous families were more effective units of production in the context of hoe cultivation. According to the administration, polygamy was beneficial for the agricultural wealth of the Ovambo and for their ability to resist famines because polygamous households could produce more grain. The missionaries denied this and regarded Christian monogamous marriages as economically more effective because the Christian men, unlike the heathens, as they claimed, participated in agricultural work. Be it as it may, the question of which system was more effective in terms of input-output is in fact not very relevant in connection with conversions. The relevant point is that from the men's point of view polygyny was obviously economically beneficial. If a man had several wives working in his field, a larger field could be cultivated and the husband would receive a larger amount of grain as his share of the crop. Furthermore, as Kreike has pointed out, land tenure may have been more secure in polygynous marriages than in monogynous ones, as the death of the only wife could seriously reduce the ability of a monogamous family to cultivate its field effectively, which might lead in due course to reversion of the field to the headman for re-allocation. Polygynous marriages were less vulnerable in this respect because labour was available even if one of the wives died. (Memo on discussions between the Administrator, Secretary for SWA, Director of Education and Native Commissioner Ovamboland

the men who had this difficult choice between polygyny and the Christian faith, as it also affected the wives of polygynous men. As McKittrick has pointed out, a woman divorcing a polygynous husband in order to become Christian was possibly leaving a wealthy household headed by a senior member of society and, particularly if she was middle-aged, her options for remarriage at the same high social level were limited.[335] In other words, by becoming Christian she, too, risked losing social status and economic security.

The important role of polygyny in Ovambo societies is shown by the fact that many Christians were unable to resist its temptation. A quick look at the registers reveals that it was not at all rare for men to be excommunicated because of "*aakiintu yaali*" or "*aakiintu yatatu*" (two wives, three wives). This is also confirmed by the missionaries' frequent complaints that many Christians had returned to polygyny.[336] The existence of Christian polygyny can be illustrated with a couple of examples. When Johannes Iitope, pastor of Oshitaji, did some investigations in 1949, he found out that some 30 men in his congregation had more than one wife.[337] A little later, in 1955, the presiding missionary, Birger Eriksson, checked the main books of Onayena parish and noticed that the local Ovambo pastor had in some cases written the names of a man, his official wife and his concubine together on the same page.[338] The pastor in question obviously did not consider polygyny a very great sin, because he treated these as forming a family unit.

Not even the best of Christians were in able to remain monogamous in certain circumstances. There are three individuals, one pastor and two teachers, whose cases not only show this but also demonstrate the close link between polygyny and social status. First we have the case of Gideon Iitula, one of the first seven Ovambo pastors ordained in 1925. Some years later he was appointed elenga (counsellor) by King Martin of Ondonga, and in 1931 it was found that he had made a girl pregnant and had had two concubines for several years. Gideon was dismissed and excommunicated, but he remained a polygynous elenga until 1940.[339] The second

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in Windhoek 23 Nov. 1936, point 6, 6/1/1, NAO, NAN; W. Kivinen to Secretary for SWA 8 March 1937, A489/2, SWAA, NAN; Kreike, 1996, p. 262–263. See also Hayes, 1992, p. 337–338 and McKittrick, 1995, p. 235–236.)

334 E.g. Tönjes, 1911, p. 132–133; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 68–69; Estermann, 1976, p. 93–94.

335 McKittrick, 1995, p. 132–133.

336 E.g. Paunu, Uno, Kertomukset Afrikan lähetysalalla vuonna 1937 toimitetuista tarkastuksista, p. 19, 27, 32, 45, Dga, AELCIN; K.J. Petäjä's Annual Report 1917 (Oshigambo), mmm 15 Jan. 1918, Appendix 10, Hha7; E. Järvinen's Annual Report 1927 (Ontananga), mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendix 15, Hha10; V. Alho, Report on parish inspections in western tribes 1928, Uukwambi, Hha10; V. Alho's Annual Report 1929 (general report), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 1, Hha11; H. Saari's Annual Report 1943 (Oshigambo, Oshitaji), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1944, Appendix 14, Hha20. All in AFMS, NAF.

337 Copy V. Alho to NCO 2 Feb. 1950, Eaj, AELCIN

338 B. Eriksson to O. Vuorela 15 Aug. 1955, Hha26, AFMS, NAF.

339 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 8 June 1931 and W. Björklund to M. Tarkkanen 4 June 1931, Eac30; Minutes of the church administration 22 June 1931 §1, Hha11; V. Alho's Annual Report 1940 (general report), mmm 22–23 Jan. 1941, Appendix 1, Hha19. All in AFMS, NAF. L[iina] L[indström], henkilötietoja Oniipan seminaarin käyneistä opettajista vuosilta 1913–1938, Pa, AELCIN.

case is the teacher Veikko Aula, who graduated from Oniipa teacher training school in 1941, continued his studies at the Rhenish mission training school in Okahandja and was then appointed teacher at the new Ombalantu boys' school in 1945. Four years later he was dismissed for breaking the sixth commandment. In 1950 he was appointed tribal secretary of Ombalantu and thus became a government civil servant. After that he was said to have lived publicly in polygyny.[340] The third case is Gabriel Taapopi, a teacher, linguist and hymn writer, who studied at Stofberg Gedenkskool in the Transvaal, passed the Junior Certificate Examination and was appointed teacher at Ongwediva boys' school in 1941. His devotion and abilities were appreciated by his Finnish superiors, but he too lapsed into vice in 1951 and was dismissed. Even though there was a willingness for reconciliation both on his part and on that of the missionaries, Gabriel did not return to school work. He became tribal secretary of Uukwaluudhi in 1953 and, according to the mission doctor, Inkeri Saloheimo, he was living with several wives at the end of the decade.[341]

It is logical to assume that the missionaries' insistence on monogamy may have been an obstacle to conversion, since polygyny was obviously a very important and deeply rooted part of the Ovambo social system, at least among the upper strata. By becoming a Christian and giving up polygyny, the outward sign of his status, a wealthy man would have lowered himself to the level of a common man. This assumption is not just logical but in some cases also valid, at least if we are to believe what the missionaries report. Sometimes, although not very often, it was clearly stated that giving up wives was a major obstacle to conversion, particularly where male members of the Ovambo elite were concerned. The case of King Mwala gwaShilongo of Uukwaluudhi is a good example. He was on the way to baptism in 1926, but then suddenly changed his mind.[342] According to the missionary Sulo Aarni, his Christian leanings came to an end as soon as Aarni insisted that he must become monogamous. Eight years later the missionary Onni Aho reported that the king was tantamount to a Christian but could not be baptised because he did not want to give up polygyny. Even Aho's remark that the King of England was a rich man although had only one wife did not convince Mwala.[343] A somewhat different case was that of the Ondonga *elenga* Namupala gAmpueja, who was one of King Martin's mightiest counsellors and had already been attending Christian education for some years when he fell seriously ill in 1933. It was only when he had been taken to the Onandjokwe hospital, and told by the doctor there that his illness was

340 Minutes of the school committee 29 May 1941 §1, Aad, AELCIN; L. Lindström to B. Eriksson 13 Feb. 1951, Ncd1, AELCIN; K. Himanen to U. Paunu 15 Oct. 1945, Eac41 & L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 14 July 1949, Eac43, AFMS, NAF; NCO Annual Report 1950, p. 1. 12/2, NAO, NAN.

341 A. Mutanen to T. Vapaavuori 9 June 1948, Eac43; L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 9 March 1951, Eac44; L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori and W. Kivinen 23 Jan. 1953, Eac45; L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 7 Dec. 1953, Eac45; I. Saloheimo's circular no. 3 of 1959, Eac48. All in AFMS, NAF; Lehtonen, 1999, p. 100–102.

342 Chapter "Conversion to Christianity"

343 S. Aarni's Annual Report 1926 (Uukwaluudhi/Uukolonkadhi), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appendix 23, Hha9 & O. Aho's Annual Report 1934 (Uukwaluudhi/Uukolonkadhi), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 36, Hha13, AFMS, NAF.

fatal probably (in the end it was not), that he took the final decision to abandon two of his three wives and to become a Christian. But even then, as Dr Melander recounts, he reached his decision only after a difficult inner struggle.[344]

It was not only members of the top Ovambo elite who found it difficult to be monogamous, but also other men of some status. In 1920 the missionary Viktor Alho, who had been in Uukwanyama examining people who wanted to be baptised, reported that there were several older men who knew enough about the Christian faith and whose way of life fulfilled the requirements for baptism, but who could not be baptised because they were not willing to give up polygyny. "My heart is bleeding when I think that I should drive four of my wives and their children away. I can't do that", one of the men said.[345] If his heart was bleeding, but he still had an irresistible desire for baptism, it was always possible for a man to cheat. Pastor Johannes Iitope mentioned in one of his sermons in 1946 that some men promised to sent their extra wives away before baptism but that it was not rare for the wives to return after he had been baptised.[346] Such a practice may partly explain why more than a few Christian men were excommunicated on account of polygyny.

As far as the women were concerned, the missionaries never mention the possibility of the economic security to be found in a polygynous marriage proving an obstacle to a women's conversion. That is not surprising. Either they had never thought of such a possibility, or if they had, they did not mention it because it was contrary to their basic idea that monogamy is good and polygamy is bad. Instead they do mention a couple of cases in which polygyny brought girls into contact with them, i.e. through the girls' dislike of becoming the wife of a polygynous man. For example, one girl who had recently participated in *ohango* fled to the mission station in Uukwaluudhi in 1919. Her relatives tried to force her to return to her family, but the missionary Alho refused to hand her over. The case was taken to the king, and Alho found that the girl was destined to become one of the brides of the king's son. In the end the girl was allowed to refuse to marry him.[347] Obviously in this case the girl found the idea of becoming one of the wives of the king's son so repulsive that the possible rise in social status brought about by such a marriage would not have compensated for it. A rather similar case was reported from Ombalantu in 1938, where a pagan girl fled to the mission station in order to avoid being married to an older man who already had one wife.[348]

These are just two cases, of course, and it is impossible to say how many more such cases there were. It is quite possible that there were quite a few girls who fled to mission stations in order to avoid polygynous marriages, because every now and then the missionaries reported that they had given refuge to girls who were on the

344 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 22 Aug. 1933 and A. Melander to M. Tarkkanen 18 Aug. 1933, Eac31, AFMS, NAF.

345 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 3 Feb. 1920, Eac22, AFMS, NAF.

346 Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan... lähetysalueilla pidetyistä tarkastuksista 1946, p. 10 (Oshitaji parish inspection 14 June 1946), Daa, AELCIN.

347 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 21 July 1919, Eac21, AFMS, NAF.

348 K. Himanen to U. Paunu 2 Nov. 1938, Eac38, AFMS, NAF.

run. Unfortunately they seldom say why the girls had sought refuge, even though their desire to avoid *ohango* is sometimes mentioned. *Ohango* rendered girls marriageable, and therefore it is possible that in some of these cases they may have wanted to avoid initiation in order not to become junior wives. It is possible, but we do not know. Neither do we know whether these non-Christian girls who sought refuge at the mission stations were later baptized, although quite a few of them probably were. It is hard to imagine, however, that girls who became Christians just because they wanted to avoid polygynous marriages would have been very numerous. Had they been, the missionaries would have reported such cases to their headquarters in Helsinki, because such stories would have made excellent mission propaganda. The third thing we do not know is whether proposed marriages to polygynous men prevented some girls from becoming Christians. It may be that there were girls who wanted to be baptized, but whose parents would not allow it because they were to be married to polygynous men. It is possible, but there is no evidence.

To summarize the polygamy-monogamy conflict and its relation to conversion, it may be said first that polygyny clearly prevented some men from converting. Many polygynous men seem to have been reluctant to turn to monogyny just in order to become Christians. In the case of women the relation is not so straightforward. In some cases, particularly with older women, the economic security and social prestige which polygynous marriages offered may have prevented conversion. On the other hand, the desire to avoid a polygynous marriage may have led some young women to contact with the missionaries.

Migrant labour and conversion

Migrant labour contracts in the Police Zone unquestionably had an important role in men's conversions. As was pointed out earlier, something like one third to a half of the men converted as migrant labourers, which in a sense is not surprising, as young men made up most of the migrant labourers and most of the early converts. But this still does not tell us anything about why so many men decided to convert in the south and not at home.

At first sight the high prevalence of migrant labour conversion would seem to give much support to Robin Horton's "Intellectualist Theory" of conversion, according to which the key factor in breaking down the "traditional cosmology", possibly followed by adoption of a world religion, was the individual's involvement in life beyond the confines of his local community (the microcosm), in the wider world (the macrocosm).[349] What could have been a more obvious case of transition from the "microcosm" to the "macrocosm" than a young Ovambo man leaving the relative isolation of Ovamboland and going to work in the south, where he would face many new aspects of European culture and the modern economic system. The way some labourers behaved after returning home gives some proof that

349 Horton, 1971, p. 101–104.

their microcosm may well have been shattered during the labour contract. It is quite interesting how Native Commissioner Hahn and the mission director, Tuure Vapaavuori, at an interval of more than twenty years, basically saw the returning labourers in the same light. Hahn wrote that these men regarded themselves as "civilised" members of their tribe now that they had seen the "world", and therefore they looked down upon the uncivilised tribesmen. According to Vapaavuori, the migrant converts who had returned home had only received a "short course of teaching" in the south, but at home they "went around as if they were masters".[350] In other words, after their contracts had finished some workers seem to have begun to appreciate everything that was "modern" and to look down upon everything "traditional". In such cases they may well have also become adherents of Christianity because it was "modern".

The Hortonian theory of a shattered microcosm may be quite a satisfactory explanation for migrant labour conversions (i.e. beyond most reasonable doubt) as long as it was customary for men to go only for one labour contract. But the Ovambo men would undertake multiple contracts from the 1930s onwards, for example,[351] and in this case Horton's theory would be credible only if the great majority of conversions took place during the first contract, i.e. when the men were faced for the first time with the fact that their own system of beliefs was not adequate to explain the macrocosm of the wider world which they encountered as migrant labourers. Unfortunately, the sources do not tell us whether the Ovambo men had converted during their first contract or a subsequent contract. Something can be deduced, however, by studying the ages of the converts. For this purpose we can use the sample consisting of the men who converted in the Police Zone and were then recorded as immigrants in five sample parishes in 1931, 1941, 1951 and 1961. This gave us 293 men whose age at baptism is known. Of these, some 46 per cent were baptised at an age between 20 and 24 years, some 32 per cent between 25 and 29 years, and 11 per cent at the age of 15 to 19 years. Median age for conversion was 24 years.[352] If we assume that men usually went for their first contract at the age of eighteen (which was the legal minimum age) or even before (as seems to have been customary), and spent one to two years in the south, the median age at conversion should have been lower than 24 years if the majority of labourers had converted during their first contract. Obviously all those who converted before the age of 19, and quite a few of those who converted between 20 to 24 years of age, were on their first contracts, but the older portion of the 20 to 24 years age group, and practically all of those at 25 to 29 years must have been on a subsequent contract. Therefore it seems that conversion during the first contract period was far from being the general rule.

Further evidence against the idea that "shattering of the microcosm" because of migrant labour, or in fact any mental factor directly brought about by participa-

350 NCO Annual Report 1930, p. 17, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani ... 1954, p. 92–93, Dga, AELCIN.

351 Chapter "Migrant labour and colonial rule".

352 Oshigambo, Elim, Okahao, Tsandi and Nakayale parish records; registers of immigration 1931, 1941, 1951 and 1961 and main books.

tion in labour migration, would have given any major impetus to conversions can be drawn from the information in Appendix 2. As the figures show, there were two conversion peaks among migrant labourers, the first from 1920 to 1924[353] and the second from 1950 to 1954.[354] Since these were also periods of increased conversions in Ovamboland, it is possible to draw one conclusion, that conversion to Christianity while the men were on labour contracts was not caused by a sudden breaking down of the "microcosm" during the contract period, but rather by general phenomena that affected people both in Ovamboland and outside it. This does not, of course, mean that there would not have been some special circumstances or reasons which made men convert while on a labour contract. Such claim would be contrary to the basic fact that so very many men were baptised while they were in the Police Zone. It is actually quite obvious that in most cases conversion in the south was caused by a combination of general factors and the favourable circumstances created by the migrant labour situation.

We are now faced with another question: What were the special circumstances which made men convert while working as migrant labourers? These circumstances, or factors, can be divided, somewhat artificially, into two categories, using the concepts of "push" and "pull" in the same way as in migration studies: i.e. there were factors which pushed men into converting in the Police Zone and factors which pulled them into doing so.

One possible push factor was that many parents, particularly at the beginning of the twentieth century, were fiercely opposed to their children's wishes to convert[355] . Since parental control was non-existent in the Police Zone, an adolescent could convert more easily than would have been possible back home, and the parents just had to face a fait accompli, particularly because this contract work as such was regarded as a transition to adulthood[356] . The idea is logical, but the evidence is quite scanty. The missionary Tylväs did report from Uukwambi in 1926 that "men have gained freedom of conversion by having themselves baptised in Hereroland,

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353 The peak year was 1921, when around a thousand converts returned home from contract labour. (Walde Kivisen laatima ehdotus vastauskirjelmäksi...., minutes of the field administration board 15 Feb. 1939 §5, Appendix 1, Hha17, AFMS, NAF.)

354 The peaks in migrant labour conversions from 1920 to 1924 and from 1950 to 1954 cannot be explained by an increase in labour recruitment, because the latter did not increase during those years, or else it increased much less than number of migrant labour converts. Unfortunately I have no labour recruitment figures for 1915 to 1919, but if we compare those for the early 1910s and the early 1920s we find that labour recruitment actually seems to have been decreasing in the early 1920s, for whereas annual labour recruitment from 1910 to 1914 was between 6,000 and 11,700 men, the corresponding figures from 1920 to 1922 varied between 3,000 and 7,000. During the second peak, labour recruitment increased by around 24 per cent from 1945–1949 to 1950–1954. At the same time the number of migrant labour converts in our sample parishes increased by some 105 per cent. (On labour recruitment figures from 1910 to 1914 and from 1920 to 1922, see Stals, 1966, p. 333; Hayes, 1992, p. 273. For the same figures concerning the period from 1945 to 1954, see NCO Annual Report 1946, p. 15 11/1, NAO, NAN; Ibid. 1948, 1950, 1952, Annexure J, 12/2, NAO, NAN; Jaarverslag oor aangeleenthede inverband nat Naturellesake Ovamboland 1954, Bylae L, A50/188/1954–1955, SWAA, NAN.)

355 This will be discussed in detail later in chapter "Christians and non-Christians...".

356 Hahn, C.H.L, Owambo law of person (typescript), s.d. (1920s), p. 10, 2/38, A450, NAN.

and now the heathens have realised that they cannot do anything about it". Alho also once claimed that many men at the beginning of the century were able to break away from heathenism only in the south, far away from their heathen relatives. He met one such man when he was working in Uukwaluudhi in the 1910s. This man was newly baptised and had just returned from Hereroland, and he asked Alho to take him to the mission station so that "he would not have to revert to heathenism".[357] But even if some young men may have gone to the south in order to be baptised, the wish to convert could hardly have been a generally prevailing primary reason for undertaking this contract work. More likely it was something extra that made contracts more tempting in some cases.

Another possible push factor that comes to mind was caused by the multiple contracts. It is possible that the men simply had no time to convert (i.e. attend baptismal school) at home if they were there for just a few months between contracts. The missionaries began to see this as a problem after World War II.[358] This explanation, too, fails to be entirely convincing. The men would have had time to convert at home when labour migration came to a halt for a couple of years during the Great Depression. But "the number of baptised men compared with baptised women has decreased considerably now that very few men have been baptised in Hereroland".[359] In other words, young non-Christian men were not particularly eager to convert in Ovamboland even when they had time for it. They preferred their baptismal education to take place in the Police Zone, as also the Finnish missionaries sometimes reported[360].

Both the above push factors may have had some relevance to men's conversion, but neither of them is very convincing as anything like a generally valid explanation. Therefore, conversion during migrant labour remains to be explained by pull factors. To understand the first of these, it should be remembered that the missionaries in Ovamboland had some tendencies to try to isolate Christians from non-Christians. In the Police Zone this isolation was broken when Christian and non-Christian men were living together on farms and in compounds. A couple of my informants stressed the role of this living together as the reason which made so many labourers convert; The Christians would sing songs and tell biblical stories in the evenings, and these aroused the interest of their non-Christian workmates in the new religion, about which the Christians were then willing to tell them

357 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 18 June 1918, Eac21; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1926 (Uukwambi), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appendix 21, Hha9; Alho, Viktor, Suhteemme reiniläiseen lähetykseen [Our relations with the Rhenish Mission], mmm 2 Sept. 1937 §40, Appendix 19, Hha15. All in AFMS, NAF.

358 V. Alho to T. Vapaavuori 2 March 1948 & K. Petäjä to T. Vapaavuori 21 Nov. 1949, Eac43, AFMS, NAF; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani.... 1956, p. 93, Dga, AELCIN.

359 V. Alho's Annual Report 1934 (general report), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 1, Hha13, AFMS, NAF.

360 E.g. E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 17 Nov. 1920, Eac22; H. Saari to U. Paunu 4 Nov. 1936, Eac37; T. Vapaavuori to U. Paunu 28 Sept. 1936, Eac37; T. Vapaavuori to the Board of Directors 9 Jan. 1937, Eac38; E. Järvinen's Annual Report 1923 (Ongandjera), mmm 8 Jan. 1924, Appendix 18, Hha8; A. Järvinen's Annual Report 1924 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 20–21 Jan. 1925, Appendix 20, Hha9; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Mitä olisi tehtävä? [What should be done?], mmm 29 July 1936 §12, Appendix 1, Hha14. All in AFMS, NAF.

more.[361] The situation was very similar to that at the cattle post, where the boys were together. This similarity is evident in the story of the conversion of Pastor Nabot Manasse (ordained 1925), who first heard about Christianity from Christian boys with whom he was herding cattle. He became interested, but then his family moved further away from the local mission station and Manasse "almost forgot about Christianity". Several years later he went to work in Swakopmund, where some of his fellow workers were Christians. They again told him about the Christian faith and he now decided that he wanted to be baptised, too.[362]

It was not only the breaking of isolation as such which promoted conversions during contract work, but there were other factors too. The message was spread in the south by African lay Christians who not only interested their workmates in Christianity, but also taught them the basics of the new religion. Although the Christian workers were in some cases ordered to proselytize among heathens while at work,[363] this normally appears to have taken place in an unplanned manner. In a word, proselytism among the migrant workers seem to have been successful because it was done informally by the future converts' peers. Thus we have once again a case which shows that conversions were likely to take place when Africans proselytized among Africans and the missionaries' involvement was minimized. But there are still a couple more factors which appear to have promoted conversion during work contracts. Many men were apparently homesick,[364] which made contacts with workmates even more important. Furthermore, as Revs. Angula and Shinana pointed out, contract workers had time in the evenings. This aspect was also indirectly pointed out by the missionary Marttunen, who worked among the migrant labourers in the Police Zone in the early 1960s. He reported that the labourers in remote areas were very keen to attend the prayer meetings he held, but attendance in the towns was very poor.[365] The workers in towns apparently had more interesting things to do. Thus, with some sarcasm, one could claim that many migrant workers may have converted because the leisure-time activities at their workplaces were limited, and therefore they had nothing better to do than to listen to their Christian workmates.

Although informal peer proselytism obviously played a role in the conversion of migrant labourers, the most important reason was the fact that conversion in the Police Zone was an extraordinarily easy way to be baptised. As mentioned before, baptismal teaching to potential converts at work sites was usually given by lay Christians, even after the late 1940s, when the Ovambo-Kavango Church began

361 Efraim Angula, interviewed on 17 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga; Titus Ngula, interviewed on 19 Nov. 1998 at Oshitayi, Ondonga; Natanael Shinana, interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama.

362 J. Hopeasalmi to M. Tarkkanen 16 March 1933, Eac31, AFMS, NAF.

363 At least the missionary Saari once ordered those members of his congregation who went south to work to get in touch with non-Christian youths and "draw them to God's word". (H. Saari's Annual Report 1929 [Ombalantu], mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 36, Hha11, AFMS, NAF)

364 Efraim Angula, interviewed on 17 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga; Natanael Shinana, interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama.

365 J. Marttunen's Annual Reports 1960 and 1961 (work in the Police Zone), mmm 17–19 Jan. 1961 & 9–11 Jan. 1962, unnumbered appendices, Hha32–33, AFMS, NAF.

sending evangelists to the Police Zone[366] . Sometimes the teaching was even undertaken by non-Christians who had grasped some knowledge of Christian doctrines.[367] The finalization of the baptismal education, examination of catechumens and baptism were then performed by the Lutheran Rhenish missionaries who worked in the Police Zone and occasionally visited the work sites. They were scarcely very selective when deciding which catechumens could be baptised, because not only was one Rhenish missionary normally responsible for a vast area with a large number of farms and other sites, and therefore had only a little time to assess individual catechumens' knowledge, but also the Rhenish missionaries were competing with the Catholics for converts.[368] It is small wonder, therefore, that the Finnish missionaries were never very happy with the work of their Rhenish brothers. They felt that the Germans' baptismal education and requirements for baptism were far too slack, and that they mass-produced Christian migrant labourers who usually could not read, knew nothing about Christianity and, in the worst cases, had not even given up polygamy.[369] In 1938 the Rhenish missionaries reacted to the Finns' complaints by deciding that they would no longer baptize Ovambo migrant workers.[370] The idea was obviously to force men to convert in Ovamboland, where they would have been more throughly educated and examined by the Finns. It did not work, however, for when the Ovambo workers in the south learned that they would have to convert back home, many of them approached the Roman Catholics, who were quite willing to baptise them.[371] After this the Rhenish missionaries relented and began baptizing migrant workers again.

The readiness with which labourers turned to the Catholics when the easy Lutheran way to baptism was blocked shows that their reasons for converting were hardly very devotional in the sense that they believed that becoming Christian, or a

366 Shejavali, 1970, p. 21, 22, 32.

367 For example, Rev. Shinana's father was a non-Christian who had taught other non-Christians about Christianity as a migrant worker. He was then baptized together with his "pupils". (Natanael Shinana, interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama. Similar cases are also cited by L[iina] L[indström], Henkilötietoja Oniipan seminaarin käyneistä opettajista vuosilta 1913–1938, p. 3 and 10, Data on people, AELCIN)

368 See A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 15 March 1924, Eac24 & Alho, Viktor, Suhteemme reiniläiseen lähetykseen [Our relation with the Rhenish mission], mmm 2 Sept. 1937 §40, Appendix19, Hha15, AFMS, NAF. Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani.... 1954, p. 92, Dga, AELCIN; Grienig, 2000, particularly p. 436–443.

369 See e.g. M. Rautanen to J. Mustakallio 14 Oct. 1910, Eac2; E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 17 Nov. 1920, Eac22; A. Perheentupa to M. Tarkkanen 6 March 1921, eac22; A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 15 March 1924, Eac24; E. Hynönen to U. Paunu 17 Aug. 1936, Eac37; T. Vapaavuori to the Board of Directors 9 Jan. 1937, Eac38; A. Perheentupa's Annual Report 1921 (Onayena), mmm 11 Jan. 1922, Hha8; Mmm 14 Sept.– 6 Oct. 1925 §4, Hha9; Mmm 29 July 1936 §12 including appendix 1 (Vapaavuori, Mitä olisi tehtävä?), Hha14; W. Kivinen's Annual Report 1936 (general report), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1937, Appendix 1, Hha15; Mmm 2 Sept. 1937 §40 including appendix 19 (Alho, Suhteemme reiniläiseen lähetykseen), Hha15; Mmm24–27 Aug. 1954 §16, Hha25; Kivinen, Walde, Raportti lähetysjohtaja U. Paunulle hänen saapuessaan tarkastusmatkalle Ambomaalle 1937 (report to mission director Paunu 1937), s. 4, Hhb2; E. Liljeblad to the Board of Directors 18 Oct. 1932, Hhd1. All in AFMS, NAF; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani... 1954, p. 64, 91–93, Dga, AELCIN; Minutes of men's days 25–26 Oct.1933 § 12, Nba4, AELCIN.

370 Mmm 12–13 Jan. 1938 §9, Hha16, AFMS, NAF.

371 Copy H. Vedder to V. Alho 21 Feb. 1938, Eac38, AFMS, NAF.

member of one particular sect, was the only God-ordained way to salvation. Instead, their aims were apparently more earthly ones. This interpretation is further supported by the activities (or rather inactivities) of migrant converts as Christians in Ovamboland. As pointed out earlier, the missionaries regarded the "Hereroland converts" as the lowest of all Ovambo Christians, and often claimed that many returning migrant converts just brought their documents of baptism to the missionaries but had nothing to do with the Christian community after that. Instead, many of them soon "returned to heathenism" or, alternatively, began to "stir up" congregations.[372] One example quoted by the missionary Vapaavuori is quite illustrative of the migrant labourers' view of conversion. In 1935 a member of the parish of Olukonda who had been baptised while on a work contract in the south was excommunicated. Soon afterwards he went on a new contract and was baptised again. After returning home he then demanded to be readmitted to the congregation because of his re-baptism.[373]

The context in which conversions in Hereroland took place may explain why so many migrant converts apparently turned out to be not such devoted Christians back home, or even turned their backs on their new faith. In the south they had learned about the Christian faith from lay Christians who were not necessarily very well indoctrinated into its dogmas and moral principles. The Christian workers sang, told biblical stories and possibly described the joys of paradise. In a word, they emphasised the joyful aspects of Christianity, because those were the most pleasing parts to them. The non-Christians then assumed that these joyful aspects were actually the Christian faith, and therefore conversion appeared to be a good idea. When a migrant convert then returned home and took his document of baptism to his local missionary he was faced with another version of Christianity. There was now a white man demanding that, as he was now a Christian, he had to reject many customs and modes of behaviour which he had previously regarded as normal or even pleasurable. The convert was then disappointed in Christianity, possibly even feeling deceived, and decided to bid it farewell.

One reason why the migrant labourers took advantage of easy conversion during labour contracts may have been a desire to find a better job by joining their employer's religion. According to Vapaavuori, many labourers gave this as the reason for their conversion.[374] If that indeed was the case, quite a few converts will have been disappointed later, because employers in the 1920s and 1930s were said to have preferred non-Christian workers to Christians, as the former were regarded

372 E.g. S. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 16 June 1919, Eac21; T. Vapaavuori to the Board of Directors 9 Jan. 1937, Eac38; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1922 (Uukwambi), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1923, Appendix 11, Hha8; A. Järvinen's Annual Report 1924 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 20–21 Jan. 1925, Appendix 20, Hha9; H. Saari's Annual Report 1929 (Ombalantu), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 36, Hha11; Alho, Viktor, Suhteemme reiniläisen lähetykseen, mmm 2 Sept. 1937 §40, Appendix 19, Hha15; Kivinen, Walde, Raportti lähetysjohtaja U. Paunulle hänen saapuessaan tarkastusmatkalle Ambomaalle 1937, p. 4, Hhb2; E. Liljeblad to the Board of Directors 18 Oct. 1932, Hhd1. All in AFMS, NAF. Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani.... 1954, p. 64, 92–93, Dga, AELCIN; W. Kivinen's circular to missionaries 8 April 1936, Ne, AELCIN.

373 Vapaavuori, Tuure, Mitä olisi tehtävä?, mmm 29 July 1936 §12, Appendix 1, Hha14, AFMS, NAF.

374 Vapaavuori, Tuure, Mitä olisi tehtävä?, mmm 29 July 1936 §12, Appendix 1, Hha14, AFMS, NAF.

as less demanding and easier to handle.[375] The converts' disappointment in this respect, too, may partly explain why so many of them soon apparently lost interest in being Christians. But there is also another potential, and more general, explanation for the labourers' conversions, which includes the above aspect. Meredith McKittrick has emphasized that conversion and participation in labour migration were two different means to achieve the same goal, that of improving one's social position within Ovambo society.[376] This is evident in the case of labour migration, because it was often motivated by aims such as making money to buy a socially important commodity such as cattle, or gaining access to valued European goods,[377] but it is quite possible that they also regarded conversion analogously as a social commodity, either indirectly (i.e. they believed that it would give them access to better jobs) or directly (the equivalent of being civilized). If so, it was only natural that they would look on their contract periods as opportunities to seize upon both of these desired social commodities (wealth and prestige as a civilized Christian), particularly as one of them was much cheaper in the Police Zone than at home.

The role of kings in the conversion process

"The influence of the Ovambo kings in the development of missionary work was absolutely crucial in the early years, as also decades later, in the same way as in any communities ruled by African despots".[378] The missionaries learned this simple truth way back in 1872, when they were expelled by the kings of Uukwanyama, Uukwambi and Ongandjera. After that they became convinced that conversions were in many ways dependent on the kings' attitudes to christianization. This idea was clearly expressed, for example, by the assistant mission director, Hannu Haahti, after his inspection visit to Ovamboland in 1912:

> "With the exception of Ondonga, people are not yet coming to the Word. Until recently they have been convinced that even when their rulers claim that they are on friendly terms with the missionaries, and do not want to prevent people from coming to the Word, the rulers still will not be sympathetic towards anybody who actually does so. Therefore the pupils and converts in these communities are mostly immigrants from outside."[379]

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375 Notes of discussion at conference held in Administrator's office, Windhoek, on 24 and 25 November 1936, p. 12 (Hahn's comments), Eaj, AELCIN; V. Alho to U. Paunu 13 June 1938, Eac38, AFMS, NAF; NCO to the Secretary for SWA 22 Jan. 1924, A489/2, SWAA, NAN.

376 McKittrick, 1995, p. 116–125; McKittrick, 1998, p. 245, 248–249; McKittrick, 2002, p. 13–14, 124–127, 175–176.

377 See e.g. Hayes, 1992, p. 150–151, 279; McKittrick, 1995, p. 124–125, 181, 236; Kreike, 1996, p. 209–210, 219–220; McKittrick, 1998, p. 247, 249–250.

378 Peltola, 1958, p. 62. (Transl. KM)

379 Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912 (Report on inspection visit to Ovamboland 1911–1912), p. 28, Lb, AELCIN. (Transl. KM) For other state-

But how was it during the period studied here? Did the kings' attitudes towards Christianity influence their subjects' decisions to convert? An affirmative answer would seem probable when we think of the role and prestige of kings in Ovambo communities. Theoretically their guiding role could be either positive or negative. If a king was strongly in favour of Christianity he could have made his subjects convert, either because they were loyal to him or because they were afraid of him. Alternatively, if a king was clearly against Christianity (or the missionaries), his attitude may have kept his subjects from converting, again either because they were loyal subjects or because they were afraid of him. Both cases in which a king's role can be interpreted as having been favourable and cases where it was potentially unfavourable can be found during this period. We will therefore try in this chapter to answer the question about the role of kings in conversions by examining the most obvious cases of kings having either positive or negative attitudes towards missionaries and the Christian faith.

The first case is Ondonga during the reign of King Kambonde kaNgula (1909–1912) and the first year or so of his brother and successor King Nambala (Martin) dhaKadhikwa (1912–1942). Both rulers were baptised in 1912, Kambonde on his death bed and Nambala at the end of the year. Both favoured the Christian faith and were on good terms with the missionaries. This was at least partly due to the fact that the missionary Juho Wehanen had once given refuge to their mother, Mutaleni, when she had been persecuted by Kambonde kaNgula's predecessor Kambonde kaMpingana.[380] Although Kambonde was reluctant at first to make his leaning towards Christianity public,[381] he had shown it by 1911 by giving several orders which were clearly inspired by the new faith. For example, sacrifices to the old gods and the use of healers were forbidden, while Sunday was proclaimed a day of rest. Finally in 1912, a few months before his death, Kambonde made his intention to become a Christian fully public and advised his subjects to seek baptism.[382]

Kambonde's enthronement had been welcomed by Juho Wehanen, who had closer relations with the new king than did the other missionaries. As Wehanen saw it, Ondonga was now reunited under one ruler,[383] whose attitude towards mis-

ments concerning the importance of a king's attitude, see Rautanen, Reinhold, Miten on suhtauduttava sellaisten kerjäämiseen jotka eivät ole varattomia (What attitude should be taken to begging by people who are not poor), mmm 22 Sept. 1911, Appendix 9, Hha6 and Kivinen, Walde, Das Untergraben der Auktorität der eingeborenen Häuptlinge (s.d. but 1936 or 1937), Hhb3, AFMS, NAF.

380 K. Björklund to J. Mustakallio 27 June 1910 and J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 27 June 1910, Eac16, AFMS, NAF; Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus... 1911–1912, p. 60, Lb, AELCIN.

381 M. Wehanen to S. and J. Mustakallio 6 Nov. 1912, Eac17, AFMS, NAF.

382 J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 10 Nov. 1911 and 26 April 1912, Eac16-17; M. Wehanen to S. and J. Mustakallio 6 Nov. 1912, Eac17; Björklund, Karl, Selostus Onajenan tilanteesta (Report on the situation in Onayena), mmm 17 July 1912, Appendix 1, Hha6. All in AFMS, NAF.

383 Ondonga had been de facto divided into two independent kingdoms from 1886 to 1908, with King Kambonde kaMpingana ruling the western part and his younger brother, Nehale kaMpingana, the eastern part. Chief Nehale's attitude towards the missionaries was often very hostile, and therefore a mission station could be opened in his part of the kingdom only in 1902.

sionaries was much more positive than those of his predecessors. This gave "the enemies of Christianity" less freedom to act, thus making the process leading towards conversion safer.[384] When Kambonde then took measures to promote a Christian way of life, and particularly after his "coming out" [my inverted commas], Wehanen's view was shared by the other missionaries. The king was now said to have given a major boost to the christianization of Ondonga, because the heathen indeed seemed to be seeking baptism, as indicated by the increased number of pupils in mission schools in many places.[385] Wehanen in particular was very optimistic. He was convinced that with the king's backing, the christianization of Ondonga would take place quickly and without opposition. He was worried, though, that under the prevailing circumstances christianization might in fact take place too quickly, so that people would change their religious affiliation without really changing their world view.[386] When, after Kambonde's death, Nambala/Martin followed in his brother's footsteps at first and continued to promote Christianity, the missionaries also saw him as a champion of the cause who would do much for the christianization of his realm.[387]

In reality the situation was not quite that straightforward. When Kambonde was publicly promoting Christianity, the missionary Björklund was already reporting from Onayena that, although the king's will was obeyed in general, there were districts in which the local headmen only paid lip service to the king's wishes while in reality they prevented people under their jurisdiction from coming to the schools.[388] Ordinary people also appear to have been somewhat hesitant to follow

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(On the division of Ondonga and Nehale's relations with the missionaries, see Eirola, 1992, p. 57–62, 225–230, or Miettinen, 2000, p. 453–454)

384 J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 24 Jan 1910, Eac16; J.Wehanen's Annual Report 1909 (Ontananga), mmm 12 Jan. 1910, Appendix 9, Hha6; Ibid. 1910, mmm 17 Jan. 1911, Appendix 6, Hha6. All in AFMS, NAF. Wehanen's view was shared by the presiding missionary, Martti Rautanen. (M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1910 [general report and Olukonda], mmm 17 Jan. 1911, Appendix 0, Hha6, AFMS, NAF.)

385 See e.g. A. Pettinen to J. Mustakallio 28 Feb. 1912 and 14 Aug. 1912, Eac17; J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 11 Aug. 1912, Eac17; M. Wehanen to S. and J. Mustakallio 6 Nov. 1912, Eac17; M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1911(Olukonda) & S. Rainio's Annual Report 1911 (Onandjokwe hospital), mmm18 Jan. 1912, Appendices 1 and 3, Hha6; M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1912 (general report and Olukonda) & A. Pettinen's Annual Report 1912 (Ondangwa) & K. Björklund's Annual Report 1912 (Onayena), mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendice 1, 6 and 12, Hha 6; Björklund, Karl, Selostus Onajenan tilanteesta, mmm 17 July 1912, Appendix 1, Hha6. All in AFMS, NAF. Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912 [Inspection report Ovamboland 1911–1912], p. 28, 29, Lb, AELCIN. ** The missionaries' view of Kambonde's great importance to the christianization of Ondonga has recently been shared by H.D. Namuhuja (see Namuhuja, 2002, p. 36).

386 J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 26 April 1912, Eac17, AFMS, NAF.

387 See e.g. M. Rautanen to J. Mustakallio 3 Jan. 1913, Eac2; A. Pettinen to J. Mustakallio 6 Oct. 1912, Eac17; J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 8 Nov 1912, Eac17; A. Pettinen to J. Mustakallio 25 Jan. 1913 and 27 March 1913, Eac18; J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 17 Jan. 1913, Eac18; J. Wehanen to H. Haahti 14 July 1913, Eac18; A. Pettinen's Annual Report 1912 (Ondangwa) & J. Wehanen's Annual Report 1912 (Ontananga) & K. Björklund's Annual Report 1912 (Onayena), mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendices 6, 9 and 12, Hha6; M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1913 (general report), mmm 15 Jan. 1914, Appendix 1, Hha 7. All in AFMS, NAF.

388 Björklund, Karl, Selostus Onajenan tilanteesta, mmm 17 July 1912, Appendix 1, Hha6, AFMS, NAF. The mood of opposition against Kambonde is also mentioned by Maria Wehanen (M. Wehanen to S. and J. Mustakallio 6 Nov. 1912, Eac17)

their king's new leaning, because there were rumours that the Christians had bewitched Kambonde.[389] After his death there were reports of a backlash which was not only indicated by the decreased number of pupils in schools, but also by the many *ohangos* that were organized.[390] Around the same time there were rumours that Martin's pro-missionary stance had begun to arouse criticism against him, and this criticism deepened to the extent that by September 1913 respect for the king in the more remote areas was said to have become very poor, and his orders to promote Christianity were generally being ignored.[391] This made Martin distance himself from the missionaries to such an extent that Liljeblad reported in 1915 that there was "a conservative reaction against Christianity" in Ondonga. The next year Lehto wrote that the king was "a spineless man" who tried to be on good terms with both Christians and heathens, but who in reality was disliked by both sides.[392] By this time Martin had obviously realized that his association with missionaries was endangering his kingship. That was indeed the case, as will be seen later.

The Ondonga case shows us that even though the Ovambo kings were more or less omnipotent, they were still not able to force their subjects to convert to Christianity just because they were in favour of conversion themselves. Had they been able to do that, there would have been a conversion wave in Ondonga within a couple of years after 1911/1912. There was not. It would naturally be possible to speculate whether things would have been different if Kambonde had not died prematurely. I think not. Nambala/Martin continued his brother's pro-Christian policy, but was faced with opposition from public opinion, and, like his brother, from the Ondonga elite. This is the first point to be noted here. If an Ovambo king tried to promote Christianity against the will of the majority of his subjects, or the will of the elite of his realm, he was destined to face at least passive resistance. This was actually predicted in 1911 by the missionary Koivu, who was of the opinion that "even if we could persuade the ruler to support the mission cause, his advisers and public opinion would soon make him change his mind".[393] The further away from the centre of power a place was, the more probable it was that the king's orders would be ignored. Thus in the Oshigambo area, which covered the more remote northern part of Ondonga, the kings' conversions were said not to have

389 Namuhuja, 2002, p. 37.

390 See A. Pettinen to J. Mustakallio 6 Oct. 1912, Eac17; E. Liljeblad's Annual Report 1912 (Oniipa) & A. Pettinen's Annual Report 1912 (Ondangwa) & J. Wehanen's Annual Report 1912 (Ontananga) & K. Björklund's Annual Report 1912 (Onayena), mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendices 3, 6, 9 and 12, Hha6. All in AFMS, NAF.

391 See M. Rautanen to J. Mustakallio 7 April 1913, Eac2; A. Pettinen to J. Mustakallio 14 Aug. 1912 and 6 Oct 1912, Eac17; J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 8 Nov. 1912, Eac17; A. Pettinen to H. Haahti 12 Aug. 1913, Eac18; J. Wehanen to H. Haahti 11 Aug. 1913 & 11 Sept. 1913 & 30 Sept. 1913, Eac18. All in AFMS, NAF.

392 E. Liljeblad's Annual Report 1915 (Oniipa), mmm 22 March 1916, Appendix 3, Hha7; E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 24 Oct. 1916, Eac20. Both in AFMS, NAF. On Martin distancing himself from the missionaries, see also RCO memo re present state of Ondonga chieftainship, Feb. 1918, p. 1, A266/2, SWAA, NAN.

393 Koivu, Kalle, Miten lähettien on suhtautuminen maakalaishallituksiin [What attitude missionar ies should adopt towards native rulers], mmm 22 Sept. 1911 §10, Appendix 11, Hha6, AFMS, NAF.

caused any increase in people's interest towards Christianity.[394] The second point worth noting is the subjects' behaviour before and after Kambonde's death. When the king advised people to attend schools, his orders were followed and the schools were filled with new pupils, but immediately after his death the new pupils dropped out in many places. This inflow-outflow phenomenon was most probably caused by the people's wish to show loyalty to their ruler. When the king ordered them to attend schools they did so, but without genuinely aiming at conversion. After Kambonde's death there was no longer any need to show loyal support for the king's wishes, and when Martin then continued with his brother's unpopular policy, people finally manifested their irritation.

Our second case is Uukwambi during the reign of King Iipumbu ya Tshilongo (from1907 to1932), a ruler whose attitude towards the missionaries and Christians was often very hostile, and whom the missionaries saw as the major obstacle to the christianization of Uukwambi. Iipumbu did do things which either harmed mission institutions or presumably intimidated potential converts. More than once he ordered individual mission schools to be closed, or forbade people to attend schools and prayer meetings. He also intimidated Ovambo teachers, Christians and converts by occasionally threatening, exiling and imprisoning them, or having them beaten or their property confiscated. A couple of times he even sent troops to Elim to keep people away from the mission station.[395]

A few months after Iipumbu's dethronement in 1932, the missionary Aho had happy news about the situation in Uukwambi. He wrote that mission work there was advancing "at breakneck speed", as future statistics would prove.[396] Let us take a look at the statistics in Appendix 1. They show that the number of Kwambi conversions increased significantly a year after Iipumbu's fall. This may well indicate that the Kwambi had had urges towards the Christian faith which could be fulfilled

394 N. Väänänen's Annual Report 1913 (Oshigambo), mmm 15 Jan. 1914, Appendix 12, Hha7, AFMS, NAF.

395 See e.g. K. Koivu to J. Mustakallio 25 March 1911 & 24 Feb. 1913, Eac16, 18; S. and A Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 4 April 1918 & 10 July 1918, Eac21; H. Saari to the Board of Directors 3 March 1921, Eac22; O. Tylväs to M. Tarkkanen 18 Nov. 1925, Eac25; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 15 July 1929 & 18 Dec. 1929, Eac29; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 5 March 1931 & 31 July 1931 & 22 Oct. 1931, Eac30; O. Aho to the Board of Directors 29 June 1931, Eac30; N. Wäänänen's Annual Report 1912 (Uukwambi/Oshigambo) and K. Koivu's Annual Report 1912 (Uukwambi), mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendices 4 and 14, Hha6; S. Aarni's Annual Report 1918 (Uukwambi), mmm 24 Feb. 1919, Appendix 21, Hha7; Elim Annual Report 1919, mmm 13 Jan. 1920, unnumbered appendix, Hha8; H. Saari's Annual Report 1920 (Western communities), mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 17, Hha8; Minutes of the field administration board 28 Feb. 1921 §1, Hha8; Mmm 30 Aug. 1921, Appendix 1, Hha8; Tylväs, Oskari, Olostamme Uukwambissa ja Iipumbun metkuista [About conditions in Uukwambi and Iipumbu's whims], mmm 26 May 1922, Appendix 2, Hha8; Minutes of the field administration board 14 Aug. 1922 §1, Hha8; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1924 (Uukwambi), mmm 20–21 Jan. 1925, Appendix 18, Hha9; Ibid. 1925, mmm 13–14 Jan. 1926, Appendix 19, Hha9; Ibid. 1927, mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendix 32, Hha10; O. Aho's Annual Report 1931 (Uukwambi), mmm 13–14 Jan.1932, Appendix 35, Hha11; Aho, Onni, Nekulun asia [Nekulu affair] (25 Jan. 1932), Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF. R. Rautanen to RCO 10 Dec. 1923, 4/1919/21, RCO, NAN; Copies presiding missionary V. Alho to NCO 21 July 1931 & 20 Jan. 1932 & 17 May 1932, Eaj, AELCIN.

396 O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 14 Nov. 1932, Eac31, AFMS, NAF.

now that there was no longer any danger of the royal wrath falling upon converts. This means that Iipumbu's earlier actions must have deterred people from converting. On the other hand, the increase in conversions, as pointed out earlier, may have partly been caused by people's desires to adapt to the new situation by showing loyalty to the colonial administration.

Although Iipumbu was the most anti-Christian of all the Ovambo kings, his opposition to missionaries and conversion was not equally strong all the time, sometimes he took actions against missionizing while at other times he seemed to support the missionaries' work. His moods in this respect changed rapidly, particularly during the last years of his reign, but it is still possible to distinguish certain periods when his attitude to christianization and Christians was predominately either positive or negative. Thus, from 1918 to 1921, and again from 1931 to August 1932, the king was mostly hostile, while in 1926 and 1929 he seems to have been on unusually good terms with the missionaries. Now, if we take a look at the figures in Appendix 1, we notice that there is practically no correlation between Iipumbu's moods and the number of conversions. In fact the year 1931, when the number of conversions decreased relative to the previous year, seems to be the only instance of some correlation. This was a very difficult year, which Aho described by saying that "Iipumbu has used all his devilish inventiveness to harm our work"[397]. On the other hand, the year 1921 was also unusually difficult. Christians were beaten, Iipumbu forbade preaching and schools, and finally the missionary Saari had to threaten that he would move to Ondonga if the king did not end the persecutions.[398] But, in spite of the difficulties, there was a clear upswing in conversions in Uukwambi in that year.

Iipumbu's changing attitudes are not reflected in the conversion figures, but this does not mean that the king's attitude and behaviour did not have any effect on christianization. In some cases he seems to have had some, usually short-term, effect on the Kwambis' willingness to associate with the missionaries, while in other cases his moods seem to have had very little effect. The available information in this respect is really rather confusing. There were cases when the king's hostility made his subjects avoid the missionaries, while in other cases this did not happen. Then there were cases in which the king's friendly attitude towards the missionaries brought people to them, while again in other cases it did not.

Some examples of the above may clarify the way in which the king's attitudes and the aspirations of his subjects interacted, resulting in different approaches with regard to the subjects' association with the missionaries. In 1912 there were rumours that the king had forbidden his subjects to visit Elim. This caused unusually few people to visit the station or attend the schools. Again in 1921, Iipumbu's persecution of Christians and converts was said to have paralysed missions and school work, because his threats had made many people distance themselves from the missionaries. Finally, during the first part of 1931, Iipumbu tried to force

397 O. Aho's Annual Report 1931 (Uukwambi), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 35, Hha11, AFMS, NAF.

398 H. Saari to the Board of Directors 3 March 1921, Eac22, AFMS, NAF.

Christian girls to participate in *ohango* by seriously threatening not only the Christians but also Aho himself. As a consequence of the king's "raging", the people were afraid to attend the schools, including the baptismal school, and for some time even to visit the Elim station.[399] But Iipumbu's hostility towards missionaries did not always make his subjects stay away. The most obvious case in this respect was in the late 1931, when people poured into the schools even though the king was hostile towards the Christians and the missionaries.[400] But something somewhat similar had happened before. In 1918 it was reported that attendance at the station school and at divine services had increased even though the king had made threats. Again a decade later, in 1927, Iipumbu had threatened at one point to expatriate all Christians and ordered all the mission schools except the one at the Elim station to be closed. As a consequence of this, the number of pupils at the station school increased. Similarly the missionary Saari, obviously referring to increased conversions, reported in the difficult year of 1921 that many young men were now ready to defiantly face the danger of persecution.[401] When Iipumbu was occasionally on good terms with the missionaries and adopted a benevolent attitude towards their work, that usually increased his subjects' contacts with the mission institutions. The most obvious example of such a case is 1926, when the king not only showed signs of being interested in becoming a Christian himself, but also declared that nobody would be prevented from "going to the Word". This proclamation led to a significant increase in the number of pupils in the mission schools, and in heathen participation in prayer meetings.[402] Other cases in which the king's more positive approach resulted in increased attendance were also reported.[403] But a permissive attitude on the part of Iipumbu did not always make his subjects seek the missionaries' services without reservations. In 1913 and 1914 he was on quite good terms with the missionaries and his attitude towards their work was permissive or even supportive, so that he made it known that people could freely attend

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399 H. Saari to the Board of Directors 3 March 1921 and to M. Tarkkanen 29 April 1921, Eac22; O. Aho to the Board of Directors 29 June 1931 and to M. Tarkkanen 31 July 1931, Eac30; L. Levänen to M. Tarkkanen 2 July 1931, Eac30; N. Wäänänen's Annual Report 1912 (Uukwambi/Oshigambo) and K. Koivu's Annual Report 1912 (Uukwambi), mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendices 4 and 14, Hha6; O. Aho's Annual Report 1931 (Uukwambi) and L. Levänen's Annual Report 1931, mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendices 35 and 36, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF.

400 Chapter "Beginnings of the mass conversions..."

401 S. Aarni's Annual Report 1918 (Uukwambi), mmm 24 Feb. 1919, Appendix 21, Hha 7; H. Saari's Annual Report 1921 (Ongandjera/Uukwambi/Ombalantu), mmm 11 Jan. 1922, Appendix 16, Hha8; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1927 (Uukwambi), mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendix 32, Hha10. All in AFMS, NAF.

402 E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 16 Aug. 1926, Eac26; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus tarkastusmatkasta länsiheimoihin 15–27.6.1926 (Report on parish inspection in western communities), Hha9; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1926 (Uukwambi), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appendix 21, Hha9. All in AFMS, NAF.

403 See K. Koivu to M. Tarkkanen 11 Aug. 1914, Eac19; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 25 March 1920, Eac22; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista länsiheimoissa ja Uukwanyamassa 2–13.8 ja 23–27.8.1930 (Report on parish inspections in western communities and Uukwanyama), Eac30; O. Aho's Annual Report 1929 (Uukwambi), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 44, Hha11; V. Alho's Annual Report 1930 (general report), mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 1, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF.

the mission schools. Still people were said to have been hesitant; they were afraid that attempts to be baptised might be taken as disloyalty to the king, and that by proclaiming freedom of contact with the missionaries, Iipumbu was just trying to find out which of his subjects might be disloyal to him. Such concerns were obviously the reason why some of those who actually came to the mission schools did not want their names to be recorded on the student rolls.[404]

The Uukwambi case shows that if an Ovambo king was hostile to christianization, as Iipumbu was more than any other king, he could obviously do something to block the spread of the new faith, in the short term, anyway. It is quite probable that Christianity would have gained a stronger following in Uukwambi during the time in question if the community had been ruled by somebody other than Iipumbu, and the considerable upswing in conversions after his downfall may indicate that people had wished to become Christian but felt that conversion was safe only once the king had been eliminated. The cases in which the changes in the king's attitude towards the missionaries affected his subjects' behaviour also show that Iipumbu had some effect on the religious affiliation of the Kwambi. His ability to guide his subjects' relations with the missionaries clearly weakened as his reign went on, however. In the 1910s his subjects were hesitant to join the missionaries even when the king allowed them to do so, while in the 1920s some of them began joining the mission church regardless of his opinions. Finally, during the last year of his rule, Iipumbu had very little influence upon people's religious choices. Such an erosion of the king's influence may have been both a cause and an effect of Uukwambi christianization, which ultimately took place irrespective of Iipumbu. It was not so much the king's attitudes that played the primary role in Kwambi conversions as the same general factors which also operated in other Ovambo communities. The increase in conversions in Uukwambi in the early 1920s is a clear indication of this.

The third case which can be taken up is that of Ongandjera in the 1920s and early 1930s. In some respects this is similar to the Uukwambi case. It will be remembered from previous chapters that the attitudes of the kings of Ongandjera towards the missionaries and Christianity had notable ups and downs. In 1923 and again from late 1930 to early 1932 the rulers were particularly hostile, while in 1926 and 1927 relations seem to have been unusually cordial. If we again take a look at Appendix 1, we notice that in this case there may be some correlation between the king's attitude and conversions, although not in 1923, because in that year the number of Ngandjera converts was higher than ever before. In the "good year" of 1927, however, conversions increased considerably, while during the difficult years of 1930 and 1931 they decreased, albeit the change in the latter case may have been caused by the famine rather than by the ruler's attitude.

The influence of the ruler's attitude on his subjects' short-term association with the missionaries in Ongandjera is less well documented than in Uukwambi, but

404 See K. Koivu's Annual Reports 1913 and 1914 (Uukwambi), mmm 15 Jan. 1914 Appendix 15 and mmm 20 Jan. 1915 Appendix 17, Hha7, AFMS, NAF.

something can still be said. In 1923 the missionary Järvinen reported that the number of pupils and attendance in prayer meetings were satisfactory in view of the prevailing conditions in Ongandjera, while in 1927 a new record in school attendance was reached, although the number of pupils decreased slightly in 1930 because of the famine.[405] But the famine was not necessarily the only reason. Sheya had recently become regent of Ongandjera, and at the beginning of 1930 his attitude to the mission was still not yet known. He had not caused any problems, but the missionaries still could not open any new out-station schools because the change of ruler kept people "worried".[406] The reason for being worried was not specified, but the Ngandjera, like the missionaries, may have been keen to learn what attitude the new ruler would take towards Christians.

To sum up the role of the kings in Ovambo conversions, one must first state that their role in promoting conversions was insignificant. At the beginning of the century, when the great majority of people still were non-Christians, a king could do little to promote christianization without risking his own position as a ruler. Whether a king could have played a markedly positive role later is something which we do not know, because no king after Martin's early reign ever manifestly and systematically supported the Christian cause. If a king wanted to prevent christianization, he could do something in the short term, but not in the long term. Even Iipumbu, who was the most anti-Christian of kings, failed to prevent a considerable number of conversions among his subjects. If mass conversions had begun in the 1890s, for example, the kings would obviously have played a more important role, but now their authority had diminished, not least because of the emergence of colonial rule. Therefore, their overall ability to control people's religious choices and affiliations was quite limited during the period studied here. In this respect Native Commissioner Hahn's view about the role of kings was quite accurate:

> "I am not aware that any native, since the establishment of our administration, has had to obtain the consent of his chief or headman before he could accept Christianity. Their choice in this matter is free and merely surrounded by family opinion and considerations."[407]

405 E. Järvinen's Annual Report 1923 (Ongandjera/Ombalantu), mmm 8 Jan. 1924, Appendix 18, Hha8; E. Lehto's Annual Report 1927 (Ongandjera), mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendix 35, Hha10; O. Suikkanen Annual Report 1930 (Ongandjera), mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 30; Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF.

406 Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista länsiheimoissa ja Uukwanyamassa 2–13.8 ja 23–27.8.1930, (Ongandjera parish inspection 4–5 Aug. 1930), Eac30, AFMS, NAF.

407 Copy C.H.L. Hahn to Mr Allen s.d. (1947), 2/11, A450, NAN.

Change and its limits

Christianization and social relations

Christians and non-Christians in the community and the family

When a new sub-group emerges in a community, the situation is bound to lead to certain amount of antagonism. This takes place particularly if the new group has a very different system of values from the rest of the community, or if it tries to keep itself separate, or is being isolated from the rest. This is what happened in Ovamboland. We will therefore take a look in this sub-chapter at the nature of relations between Christians and non-Christians on two levels. First we have the community level, i.e. what was this relationship in the various communities like, and what factors affected its evolution? The second one is family level, i.e. how did parents react to their children's wishes to convert?

In the 1930s the colonial administration, and Native Commissioner Hahn in particular, became alarmed about the effects of christianization on the authority of traditional leaders. As Hahn saw it, Christians were becoming separated from the rest of the community, and the growing influence of the Ovambo teachers as their leaders had become a threat to "prober tribal order and discipline".[1] In 1937 he described the effects of the Ovambo teachers' role among the Christians as follows:

> "In fact instances occurred where the Missions took advantage of the state of affairs obtaining to organise their teachers into semi-judicial bodies and granted them powers of settling disputes, civil and even criminal cases where both parties were Christians.
> The position was reached where a rift was gradually but surely appearing in all the tribes with the Christians on one side and the heathen on the other. Indeed this division was being accepted by the missionaries as evidenced by the appointment of spies who reported on the private doings of the ordinary rank and file of the Christians whose misdeeds then formed the subject of proceedings before the semi-judicial bodies already mentioned."[2]

Although the Finns denied the existence of rifts between Christians and heathens,[3] some kind of a rift did exist. It was not necessarily caused any longer by the spatial

1 E.g. Copies NCO to the Secretary for SWA 15 June 1932 and 4 April 1933, 6/1/1, NAO, NAN.
2 NCO Annual Report 1937, p. 15, 11/1, NAO, NAN.
3 Some remarks to the report 1937 of the Government of SWA in regard to the mission work in Ovamboland by central committee Finnish Mission Ovamboland, April 1939, p. 4–5, Eaj, ALCIN.

separation described earlier, but instead it was more of a psychological one. Some of McKittrick's informants recalled such a gulf separating communities, in that the Christians wanted to be separated from the non-Christians because they felt a sense of alienation from them, and even fear of them.[4] Alienation and fear were not Christian privileges, though, because non-Christians had similar feelings towards the Christians, too.[5] But even with such reciprocal wariness, relations between Christians and non-Christians did not evolve into mere hostility. In fact, the picture is quite confusing. Some converts obviously lost their non-Christian friends, as Frans Kaukondi did, while others, such as Efraim Angula, could maintain friendship ties even when religious affiliation changed.[6] The confusion continues if we try to describe the relationship between the groups in general terms. Both Angula and Kaukondi recalled that Christians and heathens mostly stayed amongst their own people. Some contacts and co-operation did exist, but rather little. According to Titus Ngula, co-operation in everyday matters was quite normal and frequent, but otherwise the differences in religious beliefs kept people apart. On the other hand, Natanael Shinana pointed out that many converts had been brought to Christianity by the influence of the rank-and-file Christians,[7] which shows that even in matters of religion the groups were not totally separated.

The little information which is available in the missionaries' records on conflict-free coexistence between Christians and non-Christians mostly appear to support Ngula's view. Help was given reciprocally when homesteads had to be moved, for example, and non-Christians also participated in the Christians' family feasts, while Christians went to non-Christians' feasts only on the sly, because the missionaries did not approve of such visits.[8] But separation began when it came to religion. Some missionaries had noticed that it was easier to get non-Christians to come to revival meetings if these were for non-Christians only, because, for some reason, heathens did not want to attend religious meetings together with Christians.[9] Religion was also a matter which did not allow for compromises. In 1923 some Kwaluudhi heathens asked local Christians to leave their homes for a day so that they could perform a certain rite. After having consulted the missionary

4 McKittrick, 1995, p. 166–167; McKittrick, 1998, p. 255–256; McKittrick, 2002, p. 206–207.

5 Natanael Shinana, interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama.

6 Efraim Angula, interviewed on 17 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga; Frans Kaukondi, interviewed on 7 Dec. 1998 at Onemanya, Ongandjera.

7 Interviews with Efraim Angula, 17 Nov. 1998, Frans Kaukondi, 7 Dec. 1998, Titus Ngula, 19 Nov. 1998, and Natanael Shinana 1 Dec. 1998.

8 Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista länsiheimoissa ja Uukwanyamassa 2–13.8. ja 23–27.8.1930 (Parish inspections in Uukwambi and Ongandjera), Eac46; H. Saari's Annual Report 1929 (Ombalantu), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 36, Hha11; Saari, Heikki, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksesta Ombalantussa, Uukualuuzissa ja Uukolonkazissa 1935(parish inspections), Hha13; O. Aho's Annual Report 1935 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 37, Hha14; Saari, Heikki, Kertomus Rehobothin asemalla 29.3.1936 pidetystä seurakuntatarkastuksesta (Ongandjera parish inspection), Hha14. All in AFMS, NAF. Cf. McKittrick, 1998, p. 255. About limited reciprocal cooperation in practical matters also NCO Annual Report 1937, p. 18, 11/1, NAO, NAN.

9 T. Vapaavuori to M. Tarkkanen 26 July 1933, Eac31; A. Mutanen to U. Paunu 15 Jan. 1939, Eac39. Both in AFMS, NAF.

Järvinen, the Christians refused. This led to an angry outburst by the king's wife, but no permanent damage to relations was caused by this uncooperativeness.[10]

At best Christian and non-Christian relations were workable, and even quite harmonious[11] , but sometimes they were far from amiable. Conflicts between the two groups did occur, as the missionaries' records abundantly show. Methodologically, their accounts of such conflicts are rather problematic, however, because they are obviously highly biased; it is practically always the heathens who are depicted as having been the troublemakers. In fact, some missionaries had created a caricature image of some non-Christians as a faceless group of enemies called "the pagan party" who did everything they could to cause harm to Christians either directly, by attacking them, or indirectly, by whispering malicious rumours about them into the king's ear. This they did either because they were just evil, or because they were afraid of the true faith.[12]

Although the missionaries' records leave much to be desired as far as impartiality is concerned, something can be said about the conflicts between Christians and non-Christians. The most striking feature is that the most serious conflicts before World War II[13] (i.e. those which were serious enough to be mentioned in annual reports) took place in the western communities of Ongandjera, Uukwaluudhi and Ombalantu. Conflicts also occurred in Uukwambi, but there the missionaries usually saw them as having been initiated by King Iipumbu rather than members of any "pagan party". This shows that it is not in fact possible always to say whether a conflict between Christians and non-Christians was in fact between the Christians and the rank-and-file heathens or whether it was actually a manifestation of a conflict between the missionaries/Christians and the elite in a community.

The geographical pattern of conflicts tells something about their causes, since the worst conflicts appear to have occurred in communities where mission work had only recently begun. Work had been going on in Ondonga since 1870 and in Uukwanyama since the 1890s, having been commenced by Rhenish missionaries, but in the west Christianity and Christians were a new phenomenon with which people were not yet so familiar. They did not know what this new group was up to, and they were perhaps even a little afraid of them. Therefore it was quite natural that they should have adopted a cautious or even hostile attitude. It should also be noted that the first members of the western parishes were not local converts but

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10 A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 27 Nov. 1923, Eac23, AFMS, NAF.

11 A Christian Ndonga woman described the relationship between Christians and non-Christians by stating that "Christians did not hate pagans; they hated their behaviour. Neighbours continued to live in peace and harmony." (Quoted in McKittrick, 2002, p. 208)

12 See e.g. M. Rautanen to J. Mustakallio 7 April 1913, Eac2; J. Wehanen to H. Haahti 11 Aug. 1913, Eac18; H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 23 July 1921, Eac22; A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 18 Aug. 1923, Eac23; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 5 March 1931, Eac30; J. Wehanen's Annual Report 1912 (Ontananga), mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendix 9, Hha6; S. Aarni's Annual Report 1937 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1938, Appendix 32, Hha16. All in AFMS, NAF.

13 It is quite possible that conflicts did occur also later, but it is impossible to analyse either their geographical pattern or their frequency in the post-war period, simply because the congregational work had been handed over to Ovambo pastors by this time, so that the missionaries were less in touch with what happened in the parishes and less well informed about possible conflicts. I assume, however, that conflicts were rarer than before the war.

Christians who had immigrated from outside, usually from Ondonga.[14] This emphasised the "us and them" situation, which again fuelled conflicts.

There were various kinds of conflicts between the Christians and non-Christians. In minor cases the heathens just "mocked at" or "scorned" the Christians,[15] but there was also pressure on them, or on those who wanted to convert. Schools in particular seem to have been targeted. Sometimes when non-Christians took action, they managed to scare away all the pupils in a school. There was also at least one case in which a school building was burned down, and a couple in which people heading for school, or for church, were beaten by mobs (but with no fatalities).[16] But things could turn even nastier if Christians were accused of witchcraft, illnesses, famines, or of failing to follow rites which were considered vital for the well-being of the community. Such accusations could lead to the eviction of several Christian families from their fields. In fact evictions could even take place without accusations of witchcraft.[17] Sometimes the situation turned into a matter of persecution, which forced some Christians to flee from their home community. This happened in Uukwaluudhi in the late 1930s, when some 70 Christians had to flee over a three-year period because they were accused of witchcraft. Many of them moved to Ongandjera, whose king at that time was known for his benevolent attitude towards Christians.[18]

When it comes to the causes of conflicts, it is best to start with the accusations of witchcraft, even though it is not always clear whether these accusations were

14 E.g. K. Koivu's Annual Report 1910 (Elim), mmm 17 Jan. 1911, Appendix 8; A. Hänninen's Annual Report 1910 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 17 Jan. 1911, Appendix 10; K. Petäjä's Annual Report 1911 (Ongandjera), mmm 18 Jan. 1912, Appendix 8; All in Hha6, AFMS, NAF. H. Saari's Annual Report 1929 (Ombalantu), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 36, Hha11, AFMS, NAF; Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 28, Lb, AELCIN.

15 E.g. M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1913 (general report), mmm15 Jan. 1914, Appendix 1, Hha7; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista jotka toimitettiin 20–31.8.1927, (Tsandi parish inspection), Hha9. Both in AFMS, NAF.

16 S. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 16 June 1919, Eac21; H. Saari to the Board of Directors of the FMS 3 March 1921, Eac22; E. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 4 Dec. 1923, Eac23; N. Wäänänen's Annual Report 1914 (Ongandjera), mmm 20 Jan. 1915, Appendix 18, Hha7; K. Petäjä's Annual Report 1921 (Oshigambo), mmm 11 Jan. 1922, Appendix 12, Hha8; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1927 (Elim), mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendix 32, Hha10. All in AFMS, NAF.

17 E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 24 Oct. 1916, Eac20; E. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 4 Dec. 1923, Eac23; A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 15 March 1924, Eac24; E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 15 June 1927, Eac27; O. Aho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30; H. Saari's Annual Report 1910 (Ongandjera), mmm 17 Jan. 1911, Appendix 9, Hha6; N. Wäänänen's Annual Report 1914 (Ongandjera), mmm 20 Jan. 1915, Appendix18, Hha7; V. Alho's Annual Report 1916 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 17 Jan. 1917, Appendix 33, Hha7; H. Saari's Annual Report 1921 (Ongandjera), mmm 11 Jan. 1922, Appendix 16, Hha8; O. Suikkanen's Annual Report 1931 (Ongandjera), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 38, Hha11; S. Aarni's Annual Report 1937 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1938, Appendix 32, Hha16. All in AFMS, NAF.

18 S. Aarni's Annual Reports 1937 (Ongandjera & Uukwaluudhi), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1938, Appendices 31 and 32, Hha16, AFMS, NAF. It cannot be said that the exodus from Uukwaluudhi to Ongandjera was a massive one. Altogether 30 people moved from the parish of Tsandi to that of Okahao between 1935 and 1937. It seems that the Uukwaluudhi Christians were actually in more serious troubles in the early 1940s, because at that time immigration from Tsandi to Okahao increased and there were quite a number of whole families moving. (Okahao registers of immigration 1935–1944)

made because the accused were Christians or for some other reason.[19] But assuming that the accusations were usually caused by the fact that some people were Christians, and noting that there is some, although not conclusive, temporal correlation between the accusations of witchcraft and bad harvests, it can be stated that the accusations against Christians were basically a reflection of the “us and them” situation. At the beginning of the 20th century the western communities had small groups of oddly behaving people who wanted to isolate themselves and were not necessarily willing to play according to the old rules[20]. Furthermore, since some of these odd people may have looked down on the non-Christians[21], it is quite natural that in difficult times the non-Christians’ accusing finger would be pointed at this strange group, which might have well have caused the difficulties by interfering with the cosmic order. But there were also more down-to-earth reasons for conflicts, as in Uukwaluudhi, where Christians in the mid-1930s had occasionally been granted the privilege of beginning harvesting before the king gave general permission to do so. Such a privilege was granted to them again in 1935, but this time it angered the non-Christians, who had obviously wanted similar permission. The heathens’ reaction startled the king, who revoked the Christians’ privilege and eased the tense atmosphere by fining a couple of them.[22]

A good example of how conflicts emerged comes from Uukwambi in 1927. Troubles began when some Christians buried a dead child at the same time as the non-Christians were celebrating *ohango*. Burying corpses during *ohango* was strictly forbidden, because it was believed to bring misfortune to the king and the community, and there was an outcry which turned into loud demonstrations at the Elim station after the missionary Tylväs had refused to dig up the body. But in due course the situation cooled down. Then, a little later, Uukwambi was visited by Viktor Lebzelter, an Austrian anthropologist, who carried out some anthropometric measurements there. His activities raised people’s suspicions, which were turned against the Christians. There were rumours that all the Christians would be

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19 Heikki Saari wrote in his 1910 annual report that Christians were accused of witchcraft in Ongandjera. A little earlier, however, he had written in a letter that there were large-scale witch-hunts going on in the community, and that many heathens had also been accused. Thus accusations of witchcraft could hardly have been a means of fighting against the Christians in this case, but rather a part of a general reaction to something which had nothing to do with the new religion. Some of the accused just happened to be Christians. (See H. Saari to J. Mustakallio 16 May 1910, Eac16, AFMS, NAF.)

20 See, for example, Kalle Koivu’s comment that conflicts sometimes emerged when heathens demanded that Christians should live in accordance with heathen customs. (K. Koivu to J. Mustakallio 25 March 1911, Eac16, AFMS, NAF.)

21 In 1937, when the mission director Paunu visited the parish of Engela, some local people claimed that Ovambo teachers treated non-Christians scornfully or arrogantly. Some missionaries also made comments which indicate that certain Ovambo teachers or pastors had a tendency to look down on others. It may well have been so, although the missionaries’ views may partly be distorted by their excessively negative attitude towards “proud Africans”. (Paunu, Uno, Kertomukset Afrikan lähetysalalla vuonna 1937 toimitetuista tarkastuksista, p. 69, Dga, AELCIN; See also e.g. A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 27 Nov. 1923, Eac23; R. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 22 March 1924, Eac24; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 18 Sept. 1926, Eac26; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 13 March 1930, Eac30; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 16 Jan. 1932, Eac31. All in AFMS, NAF.)

22 O. Aho’s Annual Report 1935 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 37, Hha14, AFMS, NAF.

exiled and King Iipumbu ordered a temporary closure of all mission schools as a punitive measure.[23] There are two noteworthy things in this story. Firstly, there were Christians who either accidentally or intentionally broke taboos and thus caused problems for themselves, and secondly, there is a hint of how the non-Christians viewed the Christians. The suspicions regarding Lebzelter, a European, were automatically directed against the Christians, which may mean that the non-Christians considered the Christians to be in collusion with the Europeans against them, that the Christians were a kind of quasi-European fifth column, again a question of "us and them".

The effects of christianization on relations inside families were basically very similar to the effects at the community level, at least up to the World War II. The younger generation's wish to convert caused many conflicts with elders, but the conflicts were obviously resolved in a great many cases when both sides were prepared to compromise. Family relations have been studied by Meredith McKittrick, whose interpretations are primarily based on oral information.[24] My findings, based primarily on missionary documents, are similar to hers.

The mildest form of negative reaction by non-Christian parents to a child's wish to convert was mockery. If that did not turn the child's head, they could refuse to provide him with the grain which was needed to pay for school equipment. They might also threaten to deprive him of food if he associated with missionaries. Some parents kept their children away from mission stations by cunning; either keeping them occupied with work or sending them to help relatives in some far away part of the country. Others resorted to violence or physical restraint, i.e. either whipping their children or tying them up.[25] Not infrequently the conflicts would escalate to a level which made children flee to the mission stations. When this happened, some parents reconciled themselves to the situation and left their children in peace, while others gathered a group of relatives together and went to demand their children back "with much noise and threats". It was not unprecedented for relatives to abduct children from the mission stations, usually while the missionary was away.[26]

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23 E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 15 June 1927, Eac27; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1927 (Elim), mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendix 32, Hha10. Both in AFMS, NAF.

24 McKittrick 1995, p. 118–122, 175–177; McKittrick, 1998, p. 245–254.

25 E.g. H. Saari to K.A. Paasio 1 Aug. 1934, Eac35; T. Vapaavuori to K.A. Paasio 16 Sept. 1934, Eac35; K. Himanen to U. Paunu 2 Nov. 1938, Eac38; H. Ranttila to U. Paunu 3 May 1940, Eac39; K. Himanen to K.A. Saarilahti 7 March 1941, Eac40; M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1913 (general report), mmm 15 Jan 1914, Appendix 1, Hha7; L. Lindström's Annual Report 1934 (Ondonga schools), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 8, Hha13; T. Vapaavuori's Annual Report 1934 (Ombalantu), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 39, Hha13. All in AFMS, NAF. McKittrick, 1995, p. 120–121.

26 E.g. V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 18 June 1918 and 21 July 1919, Eac21; S. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 16 June 1919, Eac21; A. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 28 Jan. 1926, Eac26; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 7 April 1926, Eac26; E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 9 Aug. 1927, Eac27; M. Anttila to U. Paunu 30–31 July 1936, Eac37; W. Björklund to U. Paunu 3 Oct. 1938, Eac38; K. Himanen to U. Paunu 2 Nov. 1938, Eac38; A. Järvinen' Annual Report 1918 (Ongandjera), mmm 24 Feb. 1919, Appendix 19, Hha7; H. Saari's Annual Report 1926 (Ombalantu), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appendix 24, Hha9; T. Vapaavuori's Annual Report 1934 (Ombalantu), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 39, Hha13. All in AFMS, NAF.

That was the dark side of family relations, a side which McKittrick has emphasized.[27] But there was also a brighter side. Not all non-Christian parents opposed their children's desire to become Christians or to obtain an education. In 1913, for example, there were 14 non-Christian second grade pupils on the records of the Ontanaga station school in Ondonga and after three pupils' names there was a note in the margin stating that their fathers would not have allowed them to attend school, while a further two had a note that they had been chased away from home because of attending school.[28] Also the missionaries would occasionally report cases in which everything went smoothly: In 1931 the parents of one non-Christian Kwambi girl found out that she had been attending school secretly for quite some time. There was no row and the girl was allowed to continue at school with her parents' consent. Similarly, one bright young pupil at the Ongwediva school had the full support of his relatives, all of whom were non-Christians.[29] It could also happen that only some of a person's non-Christian relatives opposed conversion; Tomas Kalumbu's uncle (his father was dead) was against his wish to be baptized, while his grandmother was in favour.[30] Even when a child's wish to convert or to go to school led to conflicts, it was possible to reach a compromise in the end. Girls, for example, could be given permission to be baptized after they had participated in *ohango*.[31] Negotiated solutions could even be reached when children had fled to mission stations and their relatives demanded them back. The missionary could let a child to return home, for instance, if the relatives convinced him that the child would not be prevented from attending school or services.[32]

Although the above examples of the cases when there were no conflicts between children and their parents are fewer in number than the opposite examples, they still demonstrate that the younger generation's wish to convert did not always lead to conflicts in families. But in many cases it did, and therefore we must try to

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27 "Informants who were children in the 1920s and 1930s report that virtually all parents and guardians resisted the idea of children joining churches and that parents went to great lengths to discourage children from attending church." (McKittrick, 1995, p. 120) (See also McKittrick, 2002, p. 192) ** McKittrick's interpretation is based primarily on information by Mbalantu informants. According to the missionary documents, Ombalantu was indeed a community in which there were numerous conflicts between Christians and heathens, and also between parents and children, possibly because Christianity was a more recent phenomenon there than elsewhere and parents' suspicions of it were therefore stronger than in many other places. McKittrick's view concerning parents' resistance to their children's conversion may therefore be quite correct as far as Ombalantu is concerned, but may overemphasize the parents' negative reactions if generalized to describe the situation in all Ovambo communities.

28 List of the second grade pupils of Ontananga school in J. Wehanen to H. Haahti 6 Dec. 1913, Eac18, AFMS, NAF.

29 O. Aho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30 & A. Glad to K.A. Paasio s.d. 1934, Eac35, AFMS, NAF.

30 Tomas Kalumbu, interviewed on 19 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga. For a case in which an uncle would have allowed a girl to convert but the rest of the relatives were against it, see V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 21 July 1919, Eac21, AFMS, NAF.

31 McKittrick, 1995, p. 121; McKittrick, 2002, p. 216.

32 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 21 July 1919, Eac21; H. Saari's Annual Report 1926 (Ombalantu), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appendix 24, Hha9. Both in AFMS, NAF. Both Alho and Saari were actually reluctant to make such deals, because they had learned that in most cases the relatives did not keep their promise.

find the causes of those conflicts. In other words, why did the elders oppose a young person's conversion? The first idea that comes to mind when one thinks of McKittrick's approach, which saw conversions as part of the intergenerational struggle for wealth and social status, is that conflicts occurred because the elders fought against losing their prominence and parental control over the younger generation. This is quite possible, but there is no actual evidence to prove it. In fact, the existence of parents and elders[33] who did not oppose their children's association with missionaries may speak against this interpretation. At least, it is not fully applicable as an explanation for all the cases, because some parents did not feel the need to defend their prominence. But some did, and did not spare any efforts when so doing. The fierceness with which some parents fought against their children's wish to become Christian may indicate that reasons can be found in religious beliefs or in deeply rooted social practices[34]. The situation may have been similar to that which, according to Ulrich Luig, existed among the Tonga of Zambia, the non-Christian among whom were reluctant to allow their daughters to marry Christians because women formed the line of succession within the lineage and marriage with a Christian would imply a danger of these daughters and their children being cut off from the religious practices of the lineage. There was also a strong sense among the Tonga that converted relatives were lost to their families.[35] In the Ovambo case it must be remembered that a person could continue life after death as an ancestral spirit providing that he or she was respected as such by his or her offspring.[36] Christian offspring could no longer do this, however, and therefore their conversion was a threat to elder generation's continued existence as members of the lineage after death. Opposition to christianization was therefore not a matter of life and death for the older generation, but rather a matter of death and the life after death. From their point of view conversion was obviously a serious blow to the lineage. The strongest argument in favour of this interpretation is the fact that the conversion of girls was clearly opposed more fiercely than that of boys at the early stages of christianization.[37] Girls were the carriers of the lineage, and their conversion was greater threat to it than that of boys. It also appears that, at the beginning of the 20th century at least, conversion was considered such a serious offence against the lineage that the offender was excluded from the kin. Several Uukwambi Christians were denied their legal shares of inheritance by their non-Christians relatives in 1919,[38] which means that they were not regarded as mem-

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33 See, for example, the Ombalantu headman Kalipi's positive comments about the role of mission schools in children's education quoted in McKittrick, 2002, p. 191.

34 C.f. McKittrick, 1995, p. 121.

35 Luig, 1997, p. 129, 145.

36 Aarni, 1982, p. 63.

37 E.g. A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 5 Oct. 1924, Eac24; A. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 28 Jan. 1926, Eac26; E. Järvinen's Annual Report 1922 (Ongandjera/Ombalantu), mmm 10–11 Jan. 1923, Appendix 13, Hha8; O. Tylväs' Annual Report 1926 (Elim), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appnedix 21, Hha9; H. Saari's Annual Report 1926 (Ombalantu), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appendix 24, Hha9; T. Vapaavuori's Annual Report 1934 (Ombalantu), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 39, Hha13. All in AFMS, NAF. See also McKittrick, 2002, p. 113.

38 S. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 16 June 1919, Eac21, AFMS, NAF.

bers of the lineage any longer.[39] On the other hand, the fact that many parents were willing to compromise and allowed their children to convert would speak against this interpretation, too. If the older generation opposed conversion because it was considered to be a breach of important religious beliefs or contrary to central social structures, there should have been "zero tolerance" of young people's conversions.

Since neither the generational struggle for prominence nor religio-social reasons can provide totally satisfactory explanations for the conflicts inside families, it is possible that the elders opposed conversion above all for practical reasons. At this point it must be noted that children's desires to attend school seem to have been a major source of conflicts between them and their parents, although apparently less so with time.[40] A certain amount of schooling was required before baptism, but parents' opposition to their children's participation in such schooling was not necessarily an indication of their opposition to the idea of their becoming Christians. It is more likely that they may have opposed schooling because children who were at school were not available to help in domestic and agricultural work. In other words, from the parents' point of view going to school made the children to neglect their family duties. This view was faced by Efraim Angula when he told his father around 1930 that he wanted to go to school in order to be baptized. Although his father was considering taking the same step himself, he initially opposed Efraim's wish to convert because of his duties as herder.[41] The missionaries also knew that attendance at school was contrary to the children's duties in a subsistence economy, and that this contradiction caused tensions between children and their parents,[42] and therefore they shortened the school year from 30 to 25

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39 Just to give another example of this, Björklund decided in 1938 to give refuge to a girl who was attending baptismal school at the Engela mission station. The girl's non-Christian relatives had threatened to kill her because she was regarded as a renegade. (W. Björklund to U. Paunu 3 Oct. 1938, Eac38, AFMS, NAF.)

40 In 1934 Vapaavuori reported from Ombalantu, which was the newest of the FMS localities in Ovamboland, that the heathens were not opposed to their children attending church services, but conflicts began if they wanted to attend school. In the same year Saari wrote from Uukwambi, a slightly older mission, that heathen parents did not like their children attending school, but usually allowed it as a necessary evil. (See H. Saari to K.A. Paasio 1 Aug. 1934 and T. Vapaavuori to K.A. Paasio 16 Sept. 1934, Eac35, AFMS, NAF.) ** On conflicts between non-Christian parents and their children concerning attendance in schools, see, for example, H. Saari to J. Mustakallio 23 June 1910, Eac16; J. Wehanen to H. Haahti 14 July 1913, Eac18; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 7 April 1926, Eac26; H. Ranttila to U. Paunu 3 May 1940, Eac39; M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1913 (general), mmm 15 Jan. 1914, Appendix 1, Hha7; H. Saari's Annual Report 1926 (Ombalantu), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appendix 24, Hha9; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista 20–31.8.1927 (Elim parish inspection), Hha9; H. Kupila's Annual Report 1936 (schools), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1937, Appendix 6, Hha15. All in AFMS, NAF. See also McKittrick, 1995, p. 175–176.

41 Efraim Angula, interviewed on 17 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga.

42 E.g. E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 16 Aug. 1926, Eac26; E. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 24 March 1927, Eac27; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 8 Oct. 1930, Eac30; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 12 Feb. 1931, Eac30; H. Kupila's Annual Report 1926 (Ondonga schools), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1927, Appendix 3, Hha9; M. Anttila's Annual Report 1929 (Oshigambo girls' school), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 21, Hha11; L. Lindström's Annual Report 1934 (Oniipa schools), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 8, Hha13; L. Lindström's Annual Report 1949 (schools), mmm 25–26 Jan. 1950, Appendix 2, Hha22. All in AFMS, NAF. Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 13-14, Lb, AELCIN.

weeks in 1935 in order to make more hands available for farming and herding during the busy seasons.[43] This probably eased tensions inside families and made it easier for young people to seek conversion without coming into conflicts with their parents.

Christianization and quasi-changing gender relations

A change in the social status of Ovambo women was not high on the missionaries' agenda. In fact, it was almost totally absent as a clearly manifested aim.[44] There were probably two reasons for this. Firstly, the missionaries were basically happy with the indigenous social system in which the women's role was confined to subsistence agriculture and domestic duties: "A woman's primary duty and call, as ordained by God, is to work for her home and family."[45] Male dominance in society was also regarded acceptable:

> "I have often seen women wanting to rule at home, but the man is the head of the family.... When you [women] marry, remember that the man is your ruler."[46] (Vapaavuori, as mission director, to the Oshigambo Christians)

Secondly, the missionaries apparently realised that they could have done very little in the prevailing situation to change the women's role because of social and economic realities. Before the gradual economic modernisation of Ovamboland well after the Second World War, women had few alternatives to becoming housewives and mothers.

The missionaries' view of the social role of women is best illustrated by their aims regarding women's education, in particular their view of the role of girls' schools. In this matter the missionaries always expressed basically one and the same view, that the main aim of girls' schools was to educate good Christian housewives who would give their children a good Christian upbringing in tidy and orderly households. The curricula therefore emphasised religious instruction, housekeeping and nursing. The secondary aim was to give some women enough education that they could serve the mission and the church as teachers, Sunday

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43 Minutes of the school committee 8 Jan. 1935 §3, Hha13; Copy Presiding Missionary to NCO 15 Jan. 1935, Hha13; H. Kupila's Annual Report 1935 (schools), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 13, Hha14. All in AFMS, NAF.

44 Kirsti Kena has argued that the women missionaries in particular tried to promote women to higher social positions, or fought for women's human rights. (Kena, 2000, p. 245, 248). Unfortunately she does not seem to have any proof of this, and nothing she writes lends any support to such a conclusion. It is quite possible, however, that some woman missionaries had ideas of working for the emancipation of Ovambo women, but the missionary community was male-led and therefore the women's wishes apparently did not affect mission policy.

45 Alho, Viktor, Lähetystyö ja sivistys Ambolähetyksen näkökulmasta katsottuna (Mission work and civilization as seen from the point of view of the Ovambo mission), 20 April 1934, Hha12, AFMS, NAF. (transl. KM)

46 Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan ja Okavangon lähetysalueilla pidetyistä tarkastuksista 1946 (Oshigambo parish inspection 15 June 1946), p. 13, Daac, AELCIN. (transl. KM)

school teachers or nurses.[47] In the late 1930s and early 1940s a more academic form of teacher training was temporarily emphasised because this was demanded by the government, but immediately after the war the girls' school curricula were rewritten and *Kirche, Küche und Kinder* (church, kitchen and children) became a more central theme than ever before.[48]

Heike Becker has pointed out that the impact of missionary involvement on women and gender relations in Namibia has been ambivalent. The missionaries' promulgation of the housewife model and puritan notions about sexuality, for example, were apt to detract from female empowerment in gender relations. On the other hand, conversion may have given women a chance to escape from unwanted polygynous marriages in some cases. Furthermore, when the missions employed women as teachers, this gave them new opportunities and prominent positions.[49] Becker's conclusions are basically correct when applied to the case of Ovamboland. Although the missionaries practically never aimed at changing women's social position, with one exception which will be discussed further below, their actions sometimes had some unintended effects on the social role of women and gender relations. These effects were indeed ambivalent from the women's point of view, but in a rather limited way, in fact. To demonstrate the dual nature of the missionaries' actions with respect to women, and to show the limited effects of these actions, I shall discuss two phenomena as examples: divorce and women's job opportunities in the service of the mission and the church.

Meredith McKittrick has argued that Christian women were disadvantaged compared with their non-Christian sisters because all denominations working in Ovamboland banned divorce among their members for any reason whatsoever. Therefore, while a non-Christian woman could escape from an unsatisfactory mar-

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47 E.g. V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 15 June 1927, Eac27; A. Glad to K.A. Paasio s.d. 1934, Eac35; Rautaheimo, Anna, Ehdotus naiskodin opetus- ja toimintaohjelmasta sekä kustannusarviosta. (proposal for the curriculum and the cost estimate of the [Oshigambo] women's institute), mmm 25 July 1923, §5 Appendix 2, Hha8; L. Lindström to K.A. Paasio 29 May 1934, Hha12; Mmm 10–11 Jan. 1940 §5 including Appendix 1(Mutanen, Laimi, Mikä on naisopistojemme tarkoitus. [What is the aim of the girls' schools]), Hha18; Hirvonen, Suoma, Jotain Ambomaan tyttökouluista (Little something about the girls' schools in Ovamboland), s.d. 1934, Hhb2; Lehto, Erkki, Ambolähetyksen tulevaisuus (The future of the Ovambo mission), s.a (late 1930s), p. 6, Hhb2. All in AFMS, NAF. Tarkkanen, Matti, Kertomus... Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1925, p. 28, Dga, AELCIN.

48 See e.g. K. Harjanne to U. Paunu 2 March 1946, Eac41; Mmm 4–6 Sept. 1945 §11, Hha20; Harjanne, Kaino, Esitys koulukomitealle tyttökouluasiassa (Proposal to the school committee regarding the girls' schools), 13 May 1946, Hha21; Harjanne, Kaino, Lyhyt katsaus Engelan Meidjiestehuis- en skoolin pykimyksiin muutaman viime vuoden aikana (A short report on the aims of the Engela Meidjiestehuis- en skool during the few last years), 5 July 1946, Hha21; K. Harjanne's Annual Report 1946 (Engela girls' school) & T. Härmä's Annual Report 1946 (Elim girls' school), mmm 22–23 Jan. 1947, Appendices 21 and 26, Hha21; K. Harjanne's Annual Report 1947 (Engela girls's school), mmm 8–9 Jan 1948, Appendix 21, Hha21; K. Suikkanen's Annual Report 1948 (Oshigambo girls' school), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1949, Appendix 18, Hha21; Laajennetun koulukomitean suunnitelma ambokoulujen- ja opettajien kehittämiseksi (School committee plan for the improvement of schools in Ovamboland), s.d., Minutes of the field administration board 17 June 1954 §12 appendix 2, Hha25. All in AFMS, NAF.

49 Becker, 1995, p. 100–105. (Cf. also Kena, 2000, p. 248–249)

riage quite easily, a Christian woman had no legitimate way of ridding herself of a husband who was violent or unable/unwilling to support his family.[50] McKittrick's argument is not entirely true, because the Lutheran Church regulations recognized divorce in certain cases,[51] and some divorces were indeed granted. Out of a total of 1,945 Christian marriages that ended in the parishes of Elim, Nakayale, Okahao, Oshigambo and Tsandi between 1925 and 1992, 408 were cases of divorce (i.e. 21 per cent of marriages).[52] Divorces appear to have been less common at the beginning of the period than at the end of it,[53] and therefore McKittrick has a point when she notes that it was more difficult to extricate oneself from a Christian marriage in a socially acceptable way than from a non-Christian marriage. There is conflicting information concerning the acceptable causes of divorce in traditional marriages. The missionaries tend to claim that no particular cause was needed and that either party could dissolve the marriage if they so wished, while both Estermann and Tuupainen list specific grounds for divorce. Notwithstanding this disagreement, it is obvious that at least such things as the husband's failure to provide food for his family or frequent beatings gave the wife grounds for divorce.[54] Neither of these was an acceptable ground for divorce according to Lutheran principles, however, and therefore Christian women had, in principle, fewer means of protecting themselves from violent or negligent husbands than their non-Christian counterparts. But divorce was not the only option which unhappy non-Christian wives had. Even the threat of divorce could be used to pressurize husbands into making compromises. After all, if a couple eventually divorced, the husband would usually lose more than one labourer, because the wife normally took her children with her.[55]

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50 McKittrick, 1995, p. 247–250; McKittrick, 2002, p. 221–222.

51 A missionaries' meeting in 1911 decided that permission to remarry (i.e. divorce) could be granted to a person whose spouse had committed adultery, or to a couple whose marriage had been declared void by the local missionary, after careful consideration, because of "coldness of the spouses' hearts". According to the 1924 church regulations, a divorce could be granted if one spouse had been abandoned by the other, if one had committed adultery or if the husband had taken a second wife. The 1929 and 1938 regulations list the following as acceptable grounds for divorce: adultery, polygyny, abandonment (defined as a case where a spouse has been living away from home for more than two years without an acceptable reason), homosexual intercourse, sodomy (bestiality), "disgusting disease", incurable mental illness and "incapability for marital life" (i.e. sexual incapability). The regulations of 1958 do not mention acceptable grounds for divorce, but there are references to divorcees that indicate that it was still accepted by the Lutheran Church. (See Mmm 27 Nov. 1911 §16, Hha6; Ambomaan evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon järjestyssäännöt 1924 §35–37, Hhc2; Ambomaan evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon järjestyssäännöt 1929/1938 §38, Hhc2; Regulations for the Evangelical-Lutheran Ovambokavango church 1958 §53, Hhc2. All in AFMS, NAF.)

52 Siiskonen, Harri, Gender and Land in North-Central Namibia, 1930–1990 (forthcoming), (p. 12)

53 In the mid-1930s the number of divorces granted to Lutheran couples in Ovamboland was around twenty per year. (Minutes of the Church administration board 1933 and 1934, Nba4, AELCIN)

54 Rautanen, Martti, Ambokristittyjen naimakaari (Marriage among Ovambo Christians), mmm 27 Nov. 1911, Appendix 11, Hha6, AFMS, NAF; Beantwortung des fragebogens... Ovambogebiet von M. Rautanen, 1913, Frage no. 8, p. 2–3; Tönjes, 1911, p. 129; Savola, 1924, p. 76; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 83; Estermann, 1976, p. 78.

55 Hahn, C.H.L, Owambo law of person (typed manuscript), s.d., p. 11, 2/38, A450, NAN; Beantwortung des fragebogens... Ovambogebiet von M. Rautanen, 1913, Frage no. 25, p. 5; Savola, 1924, p. 77; Loeb, 1962, p. 258; Hishongwa, 1983, p. 21; Kreike, 1996, p. 267. ** Although children

It is reasonable to ask at this point whether divorce, defined as the dissolution of marriage on grounds acceptable to the community norms, was more common in pre-Christian Ovambo communities than among Christians. No definite answer can be given, because there is very little information about the divorce rate in non-Christian marriages. Some missionaries and scholars are of the opinion that divorce was common, however, and Loeb, for example, states that non-Christian Kwanyama women married an average of three times during their lives.[56] On the other hand, some Ovambos have claimed that "in the olden days" divorce was a taboo and therefore not common.[57] I tend to agree with those who claim that divorce was more common among non-Christians. This would be logical because they obviously had a larger number of acceptable grounds for divorce.

There is yet another question, however: Was it the wives or husbands who usually wanted to obtain a divorce? Again the answer can be only tentative. Laura Juntunen has argued that women sought to end marriages more often than men because men had more to lose in divorce. They not only lost labour but also status. The women, on the other hand, had less to lose because they could always count on support from their matrilineal kin.[58] McKittrick disagrees and argues that women were more reluctant than men to end traditional marriages, because they had economically more to lose.[59] I agree with Juntunen. Her conclusion is logically valid and there is also some (albeit obviously rather insufficient) evidence concerning Christian marriages which hints in the same direction. Namely, out of 13 divorces granted by the church administration in 1934 on the grounds of desertion, the divorce was sought in ten cases by husbands whose wives had left them.[60] It is also worth noting that the church regulations of 1929/38 had a particular stipulation concerning disciplinary measures against "those wives who have the habit of leaving their husbands for trivial reasons".[61]

We thus come to the conclusion that divorce was easier in traditional marriages than in Christian ones, and that it was normally the women who used divorce as a means of escape from unbearable marriages. It can therefore be said that when christianization made divorce more difficult it also weakened the women's possi-

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usually left with their mother after a divorce (because they were members of her clan) this rule was not without its exceptions, and it appears that in some cases children could remain with their father. (See Loeb, 1962, p. 258; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 85; McKittrick, 1995, p. 59–60)

56 Loeb, 1962, p. 241. For other references concerning the commonness of divorce, see Savola, 1924, p. 76; Estermann, 1976, p. 78; Becker, 1996, p. 18; Juntunen, 2002, p. 49.

57 ELC no. 61, p. 130; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 86. (See also Hishongwa, 1983, p. 21)

58 Juntunen, 2002, p. 50. See also Loeb, 1962, p. 257.

59 McKittrick, 2002, p. 222. McKittrick points out that women who left marriages had to return everything given to them by their husbands to him or his kin, and that they often had difficulties in meeting such requirements. That may well be true, but her interpretation ignores the support which a divorced woman was entitled to receive from her matrilineal kin, although McKittrick is obviously aware of the existence of this support. Furthermore, she claims that the men usually kept the children after a divorce. This is contrary to most available evidence, which, as I have pointed out above, strongly suggests that in most cases the children stayed with their mother.

60 Minutes of the Field Administration Board 4 April 1934 §6; Minutes of the Church Administration Board 23 May 1934 §1, 15 Sept. 1934 §1, 17 Nov. 1934 §1. All in Nba4, AELCIN.

61 Ambomaan Evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon järjestyssäännöt 1929/38 §40, Hhc2, AFMS, NAF.

bilities for leaving cruel or negligent husbands, and it also weakened their bargaining position within marriage by taking away an important means of exerting pressure on their husbands. This is not quite true, however, for it would be more accurate to say that christianization would have considerably weakened the position of women in these respects if Christians had followed the church regulations regarding divorce, but they obviously did not. Although some twenty per cent of Christian marriages in the 20th century ended in church-sanctioned divorce, these were not the only marriages that ended in *de facto* divorce. Christian marriages probably had a more binding effect than traditional marriages, as some local people close to the colonial administration claimed[62], for example, but this did not mean that Christians did not separate from their spouses even without the blessing of the church. On the contrary, separation or desertion appears to have been quite common, because the missionaries often complained how easily the Christians deserted their spouses, or how poorly they understood the "sanctity"of Christian marriage etc.[63] This indicates that many Christian women (and men too) continued to leave marriages according to the indigenous rules of divorce, rather than by following the church's rules. Therefore, in reality, the stricter Christian divorce rules did not limit the possibility for women to obtain a divorce quite as much as they might appear to have done at first sight.

The Finnish mission offered a limited number of women working opportunities outside the confines of the home, either as teachers or as nurses. The first female teacher, Johanna Kristof, graduated from teacher training school in 1928, and by 1956 a total of 145 women had completed teacher training.[64] Correspondingly, the first women nurses graduated in 1935, and there were 22 Ovambo women working as nurses in 1955.[65] Whether or not becoming a teacher or nurse boosted a woman's social status, and to what extent it may have done so, I do not know. Women's economic possibilities were not greatly boosted by a teaching career, be-

62 NCO Annual Report 1939, p. 35, 2/18, A450, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1948, Annexure O, 12/2, NAO, NAN.

63 E.g. E. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 24 March 1927, Eac27; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 4 July 1929, Eac29; Alho, Viktor, kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista länsiheimoissa ja Uukwanyamassa 1930 (Uukwaluudhi parish inspection 9–10 Aug. 1930), Eac30; E.J. Pentti to colleagues 2 Sept. 1956, Eac47; A. Perheentupa's Annual Report 1927 (Onayena), mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendix 16, Hha10; Minutes of the synodal meeting 2–3 May 1929 §6, Hha10; T. Vapaavuori's Annual Report 1935 (Onayena) & H. Saari's Annual Report 1935 (Uukwambi), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendices 12 and 32, Hha14; Kivinen, Walde, Raportti lähetysjohtaja Uno Paunulle hänen saapuessaan tarkastusmatkalle Ambomaalle 1937 (Report to mission director Paunu before his inspection visit in Ovamboland in 1937), p. 5, Hhb2. All in AFMS, NAF. Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 21, Lb, AELCIN; Tarkkanen, Matti, Kertomus... Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1925, p. 21, Dga, AELCIN; Paunu, Uno, Kertomukset Afrikan lähetysalalla vuonna 1937 toimitetuista tarkastuksista, p. 17, 19, 27, 46, Dga, AELCIN; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 86. (For examples of desertion cases, see Witnessed statement by Josef Sakeus 18 Dec. 1953, 32/6/6, NAO; NAN; McKittrick, 2002, p. 222–223)

64 Lehtonen, 1999, Appendices 4b and 5b, p. 173–180.

65 A. Melander's Annual Report 1935 (Onandjokwe hospital), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 14, Hha14; Tilastotietoa SLS:n sairaanhoitotyöstä Ambomaalla 1955 (statistics on the FMS medical work in Ovamboland 1955), Hha27. Both in AFMS, NAF.

cause teachers' salaries were poor until the 1950s, but becoming a mission employee was more tempting for women than for men. This became evident in the mid-1940s, when young men lost interest in becoming teachers because of the poor salaries, whereas women's interest in the teaching profession was increasing. The pattern was also the same in the 1960s, in that the women's teacher training school had more qualified applicants than student places while the situation at the men's teacher training school was the other way round.[66] Although salaries were poor, becoming a teacher or nurse gave some women access to cash earnings, while the men were able to earn cash as migrant labourers.

Even though the mission did offer some women professional careers, most could not continue with these "modern" careers for very long on account of social and economic realities. The missionaries expected women teachers and nurses to remain unmarried, because maintaining a proper Christian home alongside work was regarded as too heavy a burden for a woman.[67] On the other hand, it was not acceptable according to Ovambo social norms for an adult woman to remain unmarried. Spinsters were regarded as something of an oddity. Furthermore, women teachers were in a very poor economic position, not only because their salaries were poor, but also because single women were not entitled to acquire fields. Therefore, they could in practice work as teachers or nurses without appreciable difficulties only as long as they lived with their parents and were supported by them.[68] When facing such socio-economic problems, few teachers would have chosen to do what Johanna Kristof did, i.e. to remain unmarried and continue with a teaching career[69]. Instead, most of them worked as teachers or nurses for a few years and then married and abandoned their career outside the home.[70] Thus,

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66 S. Hirvonen's Annual Report 1945 (Uukwanyama schools), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1946, Appendix 18, Hha20; L. Lindström's Annual Report 1947 (Ovamboland schools), mmm 8–9 Jan. 1948, Appendix 3, Hha21; M. Ihamäki's Annual Report 1964 (Ongwediva teacher training school) and U. Nenonen's Annual Report 1964 (Ongandjera teacher training school), mmm 26 Feb.– 1 March 1965, unnumbered appendices, Hha36. All in AFMS, NAF.

67 Lehto, Erkki, Ambolähetyksen koulutyön edelleen kehittäminen (The further development of school work), 2 March 1934, Hha12.

68 See e.g. V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 15 June 1927, Eac27; V. Alho to K.A. Paasio 25 Oct. 1934, Eac35; K. Hirn's Annual Report 1927 (Onandjokwe), mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendix 11, Hha10; Lehto, Erkki, Ambolähetyksen koulutyön edelleen kehittäminen, 2 March 1934, Hha12; Alho, Viktor, Lähetystyö ja sivistys ambolähetyksen näkökulmasta katsottuna, 20 April 1934, Hha12; S. Hirvonen's Annual Report 1945 (Uukwanyama schools), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1946, Appendix 18, Hha20; L. Lindström's Annual Report 1948 (Ovamboland schools), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1949, Appendix 4, Hha21. All in AFMS, NAF. Lehtonen, 1999, p. 82; Kena, 2000, p. 244–245, 246.

69 *Ambomaa*, 1959, p. 223; Lehtonen, 1999, p. 83.

70 See e.g. V. Alho to K.A. Paasio 25 Oct. 1934, Eac35; A. Melander to K.A. Paasio 26 May 1934, Eac35; W. Kivinen to K.A. Paasio 9 April 1935, Eac36; A. Melander to T. Vapaavuori 8 Sept. 1947, Eac42; Lehto, Erkki, Ambolähetyksen koulutyön edelleen kehittäminen, 2 March 1934, Hha12; Alho, Viktor, Lähetystyö ja sivistys ambolähetyksen näkökulmasta, 20 April 1934, Hha12; A. Melander's Annual Report 1936 (Onandjokwe hospital), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1937, Appendix 23, Hha15; A. Ripatti's Annual Report 1942 (Onayena schools), mmm20–21 Jan. 1943, Appendix 4, Hha20; L. Levänen's Annual Report 1946 (Onandjokwe), mmm 22–23 Jan. 1947, Appendix 7, Hha21; Minutes of the schools committee 26 Jan. 1950 §4, Hha22; B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1955 (General report) and I. Saloheimo's Annual Report 1955 (Onandjokwe hospital), mmm 10–12 Jan. 1956, Appendices 1 and 4, Hha27; H. Haapanen's Annual Report 1956 (Oshigambo girls' school), mmm 9–12 Jan. 1957, Appendix 27, Hha28; H. von Schantz's Annual Report 1958 (Onandjokwe

when women had to choose between a potentially status-boosting modern career and a socially acceptable and economically more secure indigenous career, most of them chose the latter.

The missionaries realised that it was very difficult for women to have a career outside the home and therefore teacher training was initially provided for men only.[71] It seems, however, that some decades later women could continue working even after marriage, although this seems to have been more difficult for nurses than for teachers, because the first cases of married nurses to be found in this material were from the early 1960s[72], whereas in some cases where conditions were favourable, married women teachers were already able to continue with their work in the 1940s. Rakel Nailenge seems to have been one of the first women who were able to combine the roles of housewife and teacher. She graduated from teacher training school in 1934 and worked at the Engela girls' school. In 1941 she married a pastor, Paulus Nailenge, at which point the missionaries demanded that she, and Rauna Haifene, who had married a teacher, should continue in the teaching profession for at least four years in order to justify the money spent on their education. Both women were willing and able to agree to this, and Rakel began working as a primary school teacher in Ongenga, which was her husband's parish, continuing her career until her retirement in 1975.[73]

Although the missionaries were not very keen to alter the social status of women, there was one social change which they did want to introduce, and which they partly justified with the aim of improving women's position. According to Ovambo tradition, marriage did not belong to the sphere of property ownership and a dead spouse's property was not inherited by the remaining spouse, but by the matrilineal relatives of the deceased. This, as missionaries claimed, was inequitable, because it left a widow and her children in a very difficult economic situation after her husband's death.[74] They therefore wanted Christians to be allowed to

hospital), mmm 13–15 Jan. 1959, Appendix 3, Hha30. All in AFMS, NAF. Suomen Lähetysseuran sairaanhoitotyön kehitys ja suunta Ambomaalla. Oshigambon lähettienkokouksen 1958 asettaman komitean mietintö (The future of the FMS medical work in Ovamboland, committee report), 23 April 1958, p. 2, Nba4, AELCIN.

71 Mmm 30 Nov. 1911 §19 and Appendix 14 (Valmistelukomitean mietintö maakalaisseminaarista/ report of the committee preparing the founding of the native teacher training school), Hha6, AFMS, NAF.

72 S. Halme's Annual Report 1963 (Onandjokwe school of nursing), mmm 14–17 Feb. 1964, unnumbered appendix, Hha35, AFMS, NAF.

73 Minutes of the field administration board 15 Aug. 1941 §3, Hha20; H. Kupila's Annual Report 1941 (Ovamboland schools) and S. Hirvonen's Annual Report 1941 (Uukwanyama schools), mmm 21–22 Jan. 1942, Appendices 4 and 24, Hha19. All in AFMS, NAF. Rakel Nailenge interviewed on 30 Nov. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama.

74 E.g. Copy Some remarks to the report 1937 of the Government of SWA in regard to the mission work in Ovamboland by Central Committee Finnish Mission Ovamboland, April 1939, p. 2; Copy Superintendent V. Alho to NCO 16 Oct. 1950. Both in Eaj AELCIN; Ass. Naturellekommissaris verslag vir kwartaal geeindig 31 Dec. 1954, p.1, A50/188/1954–1955, SWAA, NAN; Alho, Viktor, Päähärkä amboseurakunnissa, mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 23b, Hha8, AFMS, NAF; V. Alho's Annual Report 1950 (general report), mmm 24–25 Jan. 1951, Appendix 1, Hha22, AFMS, NAF; *Ambomaa*, 1959, p. 33.

Young nurses in the Onandjokwe hospital. Becoming a nurse or a teacher in the service of the Finnish mission offered some women access to independent cash earnings, although most of them were unable to continue working after they married. (Photo by courtesy of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission)

marry into each other's property.[75] In their opinion, such a change was not only, or even primarily, necessary in order to improve the position of women, but there were also other reasons. They claimed that the traditional system caused disputes over property and thus broke up marriages, and that it also made the proper Christian upbringing of children impossible. Occasionally they also claimed that patrilineal inheritance and joint ownership of property in marriage were "Christian" or "civilized" systems.[76]

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75 Missionaries' aim of changing the marriage and inheritance systems contained conflicting elements from the point of view of the woman's economic position. The right to inherit property from a dead husband would obviously have improved a widow's position and that of her children. On the other hand, joint ownership of property would have weakened the wife's position. In traditional marriages the women had their own property, which they could use independently of their husbands, while in marriages with jointly owned property, if the prevailing SWA laws were followed, the husband would have been the administrator of the joint estate. (Cf. Tuupainen, 1970, p. 122; Becker & Hinz, 1995, p. 33, 65–66; Kreike, 1996, p. 300.)

76 E.g. T. Vapaavuori to M. Tarkkanen 23 Jan. 1933, Eac31; Minutes of the synodal meeting 2–3 May 1929 §7, Hha10; V. Alho's Annual Report 1929 (general report), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 1, Hha11; Minutes of the 10th synod of Ovambo Church 31 Aug. – 2 Sept 1950 § 6, 8, Hha22; Mmm 24–27 Aug. 1954 §6, Hha25. All in AFMS, NAF. Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan ja Okavangon lähetysalueilla pidetyistä tarkastuksista 1946, p. 7 (Mission director Vapaavuori's meeting with Olukonda teachers and elders 11 June 1946), Daac, AELCIN; Copy Some remarks to the report 1937..., April 1939, p. 2 & Copy Superintendent V. Alho to NCO 16 Oct. 1950, Eaj, AELCIN.

Although improving the position of women was just one argument for patrilineal inheritance and joined ownership of property, it is still worth taking a short look at what the missionaries did to achieve these goals and to what extent they succeeded. Little was done before World War II, and even less achieved, although inheritance and property matters were discussed at synod meetings and the need for change was acknowledged.[77] Apart from this, Christian leaders in Ombalantu and Uukwanyama occasionally tried to press community leaders to allow the joint ownership of property and mutual inheritance for Christian couples, but these attempts were apparently unsuccessful. Neither were the missionaries very successful when they asked King Martin of Ondonga to allow Christian widows to inherit their husbands' property. Martin promised to do something about the matter at first in 1920, but later informed the missionaries that the people's opposition to the change was so strong that it would not work. King Mwaala of Uukwaluudhi went further, and passed an "inheritance law for Christians" in 1926, but it hardly led to anything in practice, because nothing was reported about it later.[78] Generally speaking, popular opposition to patrilineal inheritance was so strong that missionaries had to admit in 1931 that it was impossible to change the inheritance system.[79] Their efforts faced opposition not only from the Ovambo but also from the colonial administration, which did not want to regulate African marriages or inheritance under the generally prevailing laws[80], while Native Commissioner Hahn was strongly against introducing European laws for this purpose, as this would have broken up the matrilineal clans (which had an important role in indirect colonial rule), would have made inheritance matters very complicated, and might have made the Africans feel equal to the Europeans.[81]

The first progress was made in the inheritance and property question in 1947, when Native Commissioner Hahn retired and was succeeded by Harold Eedes, who was more willing to interfere in matters that previously had been left to be regulated by traditional law.[82] The missionaries knew this[83] and decided to seize

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77 Minutes of the synodal meeting 2–3 May 1929 § 7, Hha10; Minutes of the 5th synod of Ovambo church 12–14 May 1931 §10, Hha11; Minutes of the 10th synod of Ovambo Church 31 Aug. – 2 Sept 1950 §8, 12, Hha22. All in AFMS, NAF.

78 See S. Aarni to M. Tarkkanen 26 April 1926 & V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 5 May 1926, Eac26; T. Vapaavuori to M. Tarkkanen 23 Jan. 1933, Eac31; Alho, Viktor, Häähärkä seurakunnissa, mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 23b, Hha8; Mmm 15–16 July 1931 §18, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF. A. Hänninen, Jumalan työtä Uukwanyamassa (God's work in Uukwanyama), *Suomen Lähetyssanomia* 1/1921, p. 10; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 119.

79 Mmm 15–16 July 1931 §18, Hha11, AFMS, NAF. (On Ovambos' opposition, see also NCO Annual Report 1937, p. 20, 11/1, NAO, NAN)

80 A good example in this respect is what happened to the Native Administration Proclamation of 1928. The proclamation had a chapter (IV) which would have regulated all African marriages and inheritance matters in SWA, but it was eventually ratified "save and except" chapter IV. (Native Administration Proclamation 15/1928; Government Notice 165/1929.)

81 NCO Annual Report 1937, p. 20, 11/1, NAO, NAN; McKittrick, 1995, p. 149.

82 "[Eedes] directly changed laws relating to women, marriage and land by proclamation, without even attempting to cloak new laws with the legitimizing veil of 'Ovambo traditions' as Hahn used to do.... One of Eedes' main objectives was to bring Ovamboland into the general orbit of Native Affairs administration in the Union of South Africa... In contrast to Hahn, Eedes sided with the Missions favouring Christian-Evangelical and Roman Dutch models of marriage, family, and

their opportunity. Thus the Ovambo church ministers' meeting sent a delegation to Eedes in 1947 to ask for the SWA civil marriage law to be made valid in Ovamboland as well. Eedes advised the petitioners to wait.[84] Three years later the synod of the Lutheran Church sent a new petition to Eedes asking him to take action so that spouses could inherit property from each other. The problem from a legal point of view was that neither the missionaries nor the Ovambo pastors were marriage officers, and therefore Christian marriages were not marriages in the proper sense but just customary unions which were not regulated by the SWA marriage laws.[85] But now the government acted. It proclaimed in 1952 that the marriage laws of SWA now applied in Ovamboland as well and all marriages also had to be solemnized as civil marriages. At the same time the Ovambo pastors and a couple of Finnish missionaries were authorized to act as civil marriage officers. Now all Ovambo marriages were to imply the joined ownership of property (unless there was an antenuptial contract) with mutual rights of inheritance.[86] The new law met with such strong opposition that in the same year the assistant native commissioner asked for a new legal provision for marriages without the joined ownership of property.[87] This was achieved in 1954, when some parts of the 1928

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inheritance, although he was not always consistent in doing so." (Kreike, 1996, p. 289–290, 292–293) ** Eedes' appointment as NCO would appear to reflect a general change in the approach of the colonial administration of SWA, which was apparently more willing after World War II to regulate life in the native reserves with generally applicable rules rather than with separate rules for each individual African community. In other words, there seems to have been a movement away from the principle of indirect rule towards more direct rule.

83 When Eedes was Assistant Native Commissioner for Uukwanyama (1923 to 1931) he was said to have been favourably inclined towards the missionaries' aim to introduce a patrilineal order of inheritance. Another thing which points towards the conclusion that the missionaries knew Eedes to be more willing than Hahn to interfere with Ovambo customs is a letter sent to him by the presiding missionary, Alho, early in 1947, soon after he had become NCO, informing him of the taboos which, according to Alho, did much harm to the Ovambo economy. Alho hardly would have sent such letter to Hahn knowing that he would not have been willing to do anything about the matter. That was not how Eedes reacted. He sent Alho's remarks, with approving comments, to his superiors in Windhoek. (See A. Hänninen to M. Tarkkanen 12 July 1926, Eac26 & Mmm 15–16 July 1931 § 18, Hha11, AFMS, NAF; V. Alho's private letter to H. Eedes 12 April 1947 & Copy NCO's confidential letter to the Secretary for SWA 21 April 1947, 32/7, NAO, NAN.)

84 Tuupainen, 1970, p. 119.

85 Copy Superintendent V. Alho to NCO 16 Oct. 1950; Copy Chief Native Commissioner to NCO 4 Dec. 1950. Both in Eaj, AELCIN; Minutes of the field administration board 12 April 1950 §9, Nba4, AELCIN; Minutes of the 10th synod of Ovambo Church 31 Aug. – 2 Sept. 1950 §8, 12, Hha22, AFMS, NAF.

86 See Hynönen, Erkki, Pakanuuden ja kristillisyyden välinen taistelu avioliitosta Ambomaalla. In Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani... 1954, Appendix 19, p. 164–165, Dga, AELCIN; Ass. NCO (Oshikango) Report for the quarter ended 30 Sept. 1952, p. 2 & NCO Annual Report 1952, p. 3, 12/2, NAO, NAN; B. Eriksson to T. Vapaavuori 24 July 1954, Eac45, AFMS, NAF; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 119.

87 Assistant NCO report for the quarter ended 30 Sept. 1952, p. 2, 12/1 NAO, NAN. On the opposition to joint ownership and/or mutual inheritance, see also: Hynönen, Erkki, Pakanuuden ja kristillisyyden välinen taistelu avioliitosta Ambomaalla & Hengellinen ja siveellinen tila Ambomaan seurakunnissamme. In Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, Appendices 19 and 33, p.165 and 216, Dga, AELCIN; E.J. Pentti's Annual Report 1956 (Ondonga parish district), mmm 9–12 Jan. 1957, Appendix 9, Hha28, AFMS, NAF; NCO Annual Report 1952, p. 4, 12/2, NAO, NAN; Ass. Naturellekommissaris verslag vir kwartaal geeindig 31 Desember 1954, p. 1–2, A50/188/1954–1955, SWAA, NAN; *Ambomaa*, 1959, p. 33–34; Kreike, 1996, p. 300–301; Cooper, 2001, p. 254.

Native Administration Proclamation were brought into effect and new regulations were issued concerning inheritance. Legal marriages now implied joint ownership of property only if the couple registered a pre-marital agreement to this effect, in which case their inheritance was to be regulated by European law (i.e. patrilineally). Otherwise it was to be according to traditional law.[88] At this point the Lutheran church decided that it would only sanctify marriages that did involve joint ownership of property.[89]

As a consequence of all the legal twists, Ovamboland entered into a system of dualism with respect to marriage, in that the Lutherans acquired joint property through marriage but inheritance was still predominately regulated in practice by matrilineal rules.[90] There are indications, however, that inheritance patterns may now be slowly changing towards a more patrilineal system. According to Notkola and Siiskonen, the orthodox matrilineal inheritance system and the system of allocation of land have been moving in a more flexible direction since the 1960s.[91] Children can nowadays inherit their father's property in some cases, while a widow may sometimes "inherit" the land which had been allocated to her husband.[92] But patrilineal inheritance is still very far from being generally accepted, as indicated, for example, by the recently reported cases in which a dead husband's matrilineal relatives have used violence to alienate his possessions from his widow.[93] It may therefore be said that the missionaries' aim of improving the position of widows and children by introducing a patrilineal system of inheritance has not yet been achieved.

The missionaries' efforts, had they succeeded, would obviously improved the situation of widows in Ovambo society, but from a widow's point of view, the inheriting of personal property was less of a security asset than would have been the right to continue living on the land which had originally been allocated to her late husband. But the missionaries never in fact advocated widows' rights to inherit land. To my mind, there were two reasons for this. Firstly, although they hoped that the land in Ovamboland would one day be individually owned and inherited,[94] they did practically nothing to promote this idea, because it would have brought them into conflict with the traditional leaders.[95] Secondly, when advocat-

88 Native Administration Proclamation 15/1928, IV 17(6); Government Notice 67/1954 (Application of certain provisions in chapter IV of proclamation 15 of 1928 to the area outside the Police Zone); Government Notice 70/1954 (Regulations in regard to the administration and distribution of native estates in the territory north of the Police Zone.)

89 B. Eriksson to O. Vuorela 30 Jan. 1957, Eac47; Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church 1954/1955 §54, Hhc2. Both in AFMS, NAF. Ass naturellekommissaris, Oshikango, verslag vir kwartaal geeindig 31 Desember 1954, p. 1, A50/188/1954–1955, SWAA, NAN.

90 See e.g. Bruwer, 1961, p. 89; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 79, 120, 122, 132; Becker, 1995, p. 108, Becker & Hinz, 1995, p. 32, 34, 55–56, 64.

91 Notkola & Siiskonen, 2000, p. 163.

92 Becker & Hinz, 1995, p. 67.

93 *The Namibian* 22 Aug. 2000 (Relatives move in for 'inheritance kill'.); *The Namibian* 31 Jan. 2001 (Persecution of widows persists.)

94 A. Perheentupa to M. Tarkkanen 6 March 1921, Eac22; Lehto, Erkki, Ambolähetyksen tulevaisuus (the future of Ovambo mission), s.d. (late 1930s), Hhb2. Both in AFMS, NAF.

95 A. Perheentupa to M. Tarkkanen 8 Dec. 1922, Eac23, AFMS, NAF.

ing changes concerning personal property, their main arguments were religio-moral ones, and improving the lot of widows was just a secondary argument. Individual land ownership would hardly have had such morally uplifting consequences as missionaries imagined the patrilineal inheritance of personal property could have had, and therefore they actually had no interest in trying to promote changes in the system of land ownership. Thus, all in all, the missionaries were not very keen to try to alter the social role of women, and when their actions, intended or unintended, did cause some changes, they ultimately proved to be rather insignificant.

Missionaries' activities and the changing status of the traditional elite

There were obviously myriads of ways in which the missionaries' activities could affect the role and status of indigenous rulers. For the sake of clarity, we can divide these into two categories: direct participation in the rulers' decision making, or in deciding who will or will not be a ruler, and indirect effects. Missionaries' activities could weaken the socio-political role of the traditional elite indirectly if christianized people shifted their allegiance to the missionaries or to a new elite which had been created by them. Another possibility was that christianization could have destroyed the religious beliefs which formed the basis of the kings' power. We will take a look in this chapter at both the direct and indirect effects. The missionaries' direct effects are studied by taking a look at two cases in which missionaries had, or were said to have had, a clear role, after which the indirect effects will be then discussed on a more general level.

There was one short period when the missionaries had a prominent political role in an Ovambo community. It will surprise nobody when I say that this happened in Ondonga at the end of King Kambonde kaNgula's reign and the beginning of that of Nambala (Martin) dhaKadhikwa. Even though the missionaries had already had an advisory role at the beginning of the century, particularly when the threat of German colonial takeover increased,[96] their involvement in politics then was far less intense and far less public than during the above-mentioned period. Even when Kambonde ascended the throne in 1909 the missionaries seem to have become involved in the succession, as the king's mother, Mutaleni, consulted Martti Rautanen, apparently in order to elicit the missionaries' support for her son, whose claim to the throne was not indisputable. In this she succeeded.[97] Unlike his mother, the new king at first kept his distance from the missionaries, but in the course of 1911 he changed his mind. He now held frequently discussions, particularly with Maria and Juho Wehanen, about how he should rule his country in a "Christian way". He also introduced reforms in accordance with the missionaries'

96 E.g. Miettinen, 2000, p. 454–456.
97 Eirola, 1992, p. 258.

advice and began, as the assistant mission director, Hannu Haahti, put it, to "annihilate pagan rites".[98]

With Kambonde's leanings towards Christianity, the missionaries' political role became more and more publicly displayed. This was seen when Kambonde was baptised on his deathbed in 1912 and decided to become "Eino Johannes", which happened to be the name of the Wehanens' new-born baby.[99] In this way Kambonde made it publicly know that the Wehanens were his "parents", and as such, prominent persons in Ondonga. Immediately after Kambonde's (Christian) funeral, his younger brother, Nambala, was proclaimed king and again Wehanen had a role to play. The proclamation took place at the Ontananga mission station, in front of a large gathering of people. Wehanen took Nambala by the hand and led him to his mother. Then Wehanen asked Mutaleni whether her first-born son had died and whether Nambala was her second son. After Mutaleni had answered both questions in the affirmative, a Christian man, Josef, proclaimed that Nambala was indeed the legal king of Ondonga. Wehanen then ended the ceremony with a prayer for the new king.[100] Such a proclamation of the new king's legal right to the throne (but naturally without Christian prayers) had previously been made by some of the most prominent *elenga* of the realm.[101]

Nambala followed his brother's policies at first by allowing the missionaries a considerable advisory role in the administration and by conducting reforms inspired by Christian principles. Sacrifices to the old gods were forbidden, as was abortion, punishments were made more lenient, the legal responsibility of the whole kin for the actions of an individual member was abolished, and Martti Rautanen began dispensing justice together with the king.[102] But this did not last long, because Nambala/Martin soon began distancing himself from the missionaries. After 1913 he appears to have ended his consultations with them, because they no longer mention these in their letters, and by 1916 neither Martin's personal behaviour nor his way of ruling was any longer in accordance with the missionaries' teaching: He had taken a second wife, his men were said to be raiding, and he

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98 See J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 24 Jan. 1910 & 27 June 1910 & 10 Nov. 1911, Eac16; H. Haahti to J. Mustakallio 10 Nov. 1911, Eac16; A. Pettinen to J. Mustakallio 14 Aug. 1912, Eac17; J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 26 April 1912, Eac17; M. Wehanen to S. and J. Mustakallio 6 Nov. 1912, Eac17. All in AFMS, NAF. Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 29, Lb, AELCIN.

99 J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 11 Aug. 1912, Eac17, AFMS, NAF.

100 J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 11 Aug. 1912, Eac17, AFMS, NAF. It is worth noting that Martti Rautanen, as presiding missionary, wrote in his annual report for 1912 that Nambala had been proclaimed king "on the command of his mother and in accordance with the agreement [she] made with us". (See M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1912 [general report and Olukonda], mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendix 1, Hha6, AFMS, NAF.)

101 ELC no. 278, p. 668.

102 M. Rautanen to J. Mustakallio 3 Dec. 1912 & 3 Jan. 1913 & 7 April 1913, Eac2; Rautanen, Martti, Harvinaisen asian selvittely (settling of an unusual case) 10 May 1914, Eac2; J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 8 Nov. 1912, Eac17; A. Pettinen to J. Mustakallio 25 Jan. 1913 & 27 March 1913, Eac18; J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 17 Jan. 1913, Eac18; J. Wehanen to H. Haahti 14 July 1913, Eac18. All in AFMS, NAF.

had ordered a man to be executed, thus contravening his own earlier abolishment of capital punishment.[103]

There is one obvious reason why Martin dissociated himself from the missionaries: his close association with them weakened his position as king, because many of his subjects were unhappy at having a king who was so much under the influence of the missionaries. Actually, Kambonde's relationship with the missionaries had already aroused criticism among his subjects, who had claimed that it was Wehanen and not Kambonde who was the true king of Ondonga.[104] During Martin's reign the situation became worse. Not only were his orders sometimes ignored, but there were also growing rumours of an eventual coup d'état.[105] A plan for a coup was uncovered in August 1913, the aim being to replace Martin with a non-Christian member of the royal clan.[106]

The basic reason for the attempt to replace Martin remains obscure. The planned coup may have been a project launched by individual members of the Ondonga elite, who, as Rudolf Lehmann claims, may have been afraid that they could no longer continue their "despotic" [”willkürlich”] rule over the Ondonga people under a strong Christian king.[107] Alternatively, the conspirators may have been aspiring individuals of the elite who hoped to seize the opportunity when they regarded the king as weak because of his "Christian leniency"[108]. On the other hand, the attempted coup may have been an expression of people's dislike of Martin's leanings towards Christianity. If they indeed saw Martin's leniency as a mark of weakness, they may have thought that he was not capable (or even willing) to defend the community against external enemies. At a time of raids and an increased threat of German colonial takeover, such behaviour may indeed have appeared unacceptable. Another (supplementary or alternative) explanation is that people feared that the Christian king would no longer perform the magico-ritualistic duties which were regarded as essential for the well-being of the community. All this is naturally nothing more than speculation, but the non-speculative fact remains that Martin's drive to promote Christianity faced considerable opposition. This shows that an Ovambo king who wanted to promote Christianity (and to give the missionaries a public role in decision-making) in a community where the ma-

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103 M. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 30 Nov. 1916, Eac2; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 11 March 1916, Eac20. Both in AFMS, NAF. Silvester, 1995, p. 8; McKittrick, 1995, p. 86. Martin's cooling relationship with the missionaries was also noted by the Resident Commissioner. (See RCO's memo re present state of Ondonga chieftainship, Feb. 1918, A266/2, SWAA, NAN.)

104 J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 26 April 1912 and M. Wehanen to S. and J. Mustakallio 6 Nov. 1912, Eac17, AFMS, NAF.

105 M. Rautanen to J. Mustakallio 3 Jan. 1913 & 7 April 1913, Eac2; A. Pettinen to H. Haahti 12 Aug. 1913 & 8 Sept. 1913, Eac18; J. Wehanen to H. Haahti 11 Sept. 1913, Eac 18. All in AFMS, NAF. (On the dissatisfaction caused by Martin's association with the missionaries, see also McKittrick, 2002, p. 142.)

106 J. Wehanen to H. Haahti 11 Aug. 1913 & 11 Sept. 1913, Eac18, AFMS, NAF.

107 Lehmann, 1954/55, p. 277–278.

108 According to Juho Wehanen, non-Christians regarded the reluctance of Kambonde and Martin to impose "violent" (i.e. capital or corporal) punishments as a sign of weakness. (See J. Wehanen to J. Mustakallio 26 April 1912, Eac17; J. Wehanen's Annual Report 1912 [Ontananga], mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendix 9, Hha6. Both in AFMS, NAF.)

jority of people (or at least of the elite) were committed to the indigenous faith, could not have his way without facing a threat to his own position. This was exactly what Rautanen had predicted; He believed that the missionaries should guide the king carefully without becoming involved in politics, and he advised Martin to proceed slowly with the christianization of laws and customs. In his opinion, too rapid and radical steps to promote Christianity or a Christian way of life would just incite the non-Christian majority of the community against the king.[109] That is exactly what happened, and as a consequence the missionaries' direct involvement in Ondonga administration ended, after having lasted for less than two years.

The above is not quite the whole truth, though. There was one administrative branch in which the missionaries were active even after 1913, and even outside Ondonga. This was the administration of civil law, in that the missionaries, together with the Ovambo pastors, teachers and parish elders, often appear to have settled disputes between Christians.[110] The exact nature of such disputes is never reported, and most of them were probably cases which had to do with Christian morals or congregational matters, but not all, because the missionaries obviously also tried cases which should actually have been taken to a headman's or king's court according to the traditional rules. The occurrence of such cases was noted, with disapproval, by Martti Rautanen, and indirectly also by Heikki Saari, according to whom the missionaries should have settled disagreements between the Ovambo in accordance with "native law" and not using European concepts of justice as most missionaries did. Furthermore, Aho once clearly admitted usurping the king's judicial powers, when he reported in 1931 that he tried to settle as many disputes as possible so that people would not take their cases to King Iipumbu.[111]

The second direct role which missionaries might have played involved their active participation, in one way or another, in actions or decisions which made or dethroned kings. The accessions of Kambonde and Martin to the throne were cases in point, but the most interesting potential case is the fall of Iipumbu. To what extent can the missionaries be blamed/ credited for that?

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109 M. Rautanen to J. Mustakallio 3 Dec. 1912 & 7 April 1913, Eac2, AFMS, NAF. The view that a king whose subjects were predominately non-Christians could not publicly be too pro-Christian without endangering his position was also expressed later by the Uukwaluudhi missionaries Aatu Järvinen and Onni Aho (See A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 18 Aug. 1923, Eac23; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 29 Nov. 1933, Eac31. Both in AFMS, NAF.)

110 See N. Wäänänen to M. Tarkkanen 23 June 1923, Eac23; A. Hänninen's Annual Report 1920 (Uukwanyama), mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 14c, Hha8; Ibid. 1925, mmm 13–14 Jan. 1926. Appendix 24, Hha9; A. Hänninen's report on pastor Simson's work in Endola dependent parish 1935 & O. Aho's Annual Report 1935 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendices 24 and 37, Hha14; J. Marttunen's Annual Report 1955 (Uukwanyama), mmm 10–12 Jan. 1956, Appendix 27, Hha27; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus tarkastusmatkasta länsiheimoihin 15–27.6.1926 (Tsandi parish inspection), Hha9. All in AFMS, NAF; Copy NCO to the Secretary for SWA 4 April 1933, 6/1/1, NAO, NAN; Assistant Native Commissioner Oshikango to NCO 11 Feb. 1937 quoted in Kreike, 1996, p. 277.

111 M. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 20 Sept. 1921, Eac2; O. Aho's Annual Report 1931 (Uukwambi), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 35, Hha11; Saari, Heikki, Ojentavasta sielunhoidosta, mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 45, Hha14. All in AFMS, NAF.

King Martin (Nambala) yaKadhikwa ruled Ondonga for thirty years, although he was twice in danger of losing his position on account of the Europeans. The first time was in 1913, when his close association with the missionaries aroused considerable criticism among his subjects, and the second in 1939 when he came into conflict with the colonial administration. Martin survived, however, as he managed to realize where the limits of his power ultimately lay in the prevailing circumstances. (Photo by courtesy of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission)

Erastus Amupolo, who studied the deposing of Iipumbu from oral historical sources, claims that the Finnish missionaries were actively collaborating with Native Commissioner Hahn and assisting him in overthrowing Iipumbu. According to him, the missionaries also fabricated stories about Iipumbu and tried to cause hostility between him and Hahn.[112] I disagree with Amupolo. I have studied a considerable number of documents, produced by missionaries as well as colonial administrators, and have found nothing which would support such a view. Instead, there are documents which make the validity of Amupolo's interpretation questionable. If the missionaries had been actively co-operating with Hahn against Iipumbu, they would surely have been keen to keep Hahn informed of the king's doings. They sometimes did send such information to the NCO, but did so reluctantly. In 1922, for example, when Iipumbu was seriously threatening the Kwambi Christians, the missionaries decided at first to follow a policy of appeasement "as far as conceivably possible". When this did not work, the field administration board allowed the missionary Tylväs to send an informative letter to Hahn, but decided that no appeal for help would be made to the administration.[113] A similar

112 Amupolo, 1997, p. 15, 16, 17. (Amupolo's essay is predominately based on three interviews. One interviewee is a son of Iipumbu's servant, while another is a member of the royal family whose father knew Iipumbu. Details about the third interviewee are not given.) On changes in the oral history descriptions of Iipumbu caused by the "tradition in the making", see Hartmann, 1998, p. 265–266.

113 Mmm 26 May 1922 § 17 & Minutes of the field administration board 14 Aug. 1922 § 1, Hha8, AFMS, NAF; Copy O. Tylväs to RCO 3 Aug. 1922, Eaj, AELCIN.

thing happened in 1931, when the missionaries again had great difficulties with the king. The presiding missionary, Viktor Alho, eventually wrote to Hahn to tell him what was happening in Uukwambi, but before the letter was sent, the matter was discussed at the missionaries' meeting, where many of the participants were against a letter to the administration. They believed that the government would not do anything to stop Iipumbu, and that such a letter would just aggravate the situation further. Therefore Alho only informed Hahn, but refused to make a formal complaint against Iipumbu.[114] Collaborators would hardly have been so hesitant.

Even though the missionaries were not actively plotting against Iipumbu, their actions still obviously had some unintentional effects on his fall. It must be remembered that the process which ended in Iipumbu's dethronement by the South Africans began as a conflict between the king and the missionary Aho over the giving of refuge to the girl Nekulu.[115] Hahn unequivocably blamed the missionaries for the conflict, saying that it had been caused "by the stupid action of the Ukuambi missionary and the decision of the Finnish Mission not to return the woman in question"[116], and in line with this opinion, some SWA and South African newspapers also blamed the missionaries for having caused the war against Iipumbu.[117] The conflict (this time) would obviously not have escalated, and Iipumbu would not yet have been dethroned, if the missionaries had been more flexible and handed Nekulu back to Iipumbu. Whether such a decision would have been morally justified is another question. But at a more general level this leads us to the question of whether conflicts were not sometimes caused by the missionaries' obstinate or undiplomatic behaviour. It is impossible to answer this question, because the missionaries' writings seldom reveal their own faults, but the answer may still be in the affirmative, because at least once a row between Iipumbu and Tylväs was, according to Viktor Alho, caused by the latter's tactless and provocative behaviour.[118]

If I had to choose the person who was most likely to have been the most responsible for Iipumbu's fall, my finger would point at Iipumbu himself rather than any particular missionary, or even the Finnish missionaries as a group. Here one must note that the missionaries also had conflicts with the kings of Ongandjera and Uukwaluudhi but in neither of these communities did the conflicts escalate to a level which would have required intervention by the administration. Another thing that should be remembered is that when Iipumbu was facing displacement by military means for the first time, in the early 1920s, the situation was caused by his raid on Uukwanyama.[119] The missionaries had nothing to do with this, so that Iipumbu was apparently quite capable of getting himself into trouble even without

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114 Mmm 15–16 July 1931 § 17, Hha11, AFMS, NAF; Copy V. Alho to NCO 21 July 1931, Eaj, AELCIN; Thomson for NCO to presiding missionary of the FMS 14 Nov. 1931, Eaj, AELCIN.
115 Chapter "Migrant labour and colonial rule"
116 NCO Monthly Report, Feb. 1932, 11/1, NAO, NAN.
117 Minutes of the field administration board 29 Oct. 1932 §3, Hha11, AFMS, NAF.
118 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 3 Aug. 1927, Eac27, AFMS, NAF.
119 Chapter "Migrant labour and colonial rule"

the missionaries' assistance. But more generally speaking, he was obviously a very shrewd politician who was able to maintain most of his pre-colonial royal powers for a long time with impunity even in a colonial situation. In the end, however, even Iipumbu made a fatal mistake by underestimating the willingness of the colonial administration to defend white supremacy over the African rulers. This mistake may have been caused by the failure of the South Africans' planned war against him in 1923, which made him to underestimate their power, or their willingness to act. Anyway, his miscalculation of the situation is evident in his alleged (angry) words to Onni Aho in 1931:

> "Don't you know that Mandume killed white men? If I now kill you, nobody will find fault with me. Nobody will defend you, not Shongola [Hahn], not Windhoek [the colonial administration]. They will all blame you and say that I did the right thing by killing you."[120]

Here Iipumbu had got it wrong. After he had laid siege to the Elim station, at New Year 1931/1932, thus seriously threatening the European missionaries, and had then refused to pay the fine imposed by the colonial administration for that act, the administration had no alternative than to topple him. Inactivity at that point would, as the administration saw it, have threatened the prestige of the colonial administration in all parts of Ovamboland.[121] Therefore, in my opinion, it is basically Iipumbu himself who is to blame for his downfall, because ultimately he failed to realise the limits within which his actions should have remained in the prevailing colonial circumstances. He refused to bend and therefore he snapped.

All in all, the missionaries' direct role in curtailing or guiding the kings' use of power was fairly insignificant, but then we come to the question of their indirect role. In this respect the possible influences of mission work are many. It would be possible to claim, for example, as McKittrick has suggested, that the gradually growing Christian community undermined the ritual (or religious) base of royal power.[122] Unfortunately missionary sources do not give us enough information to analyse this aspect thoroughly. All that can be said is that McKittrick's idea is logical. Let us take the kings' role as mediators between their subjects and the powerful royal *aathithi* (ancestral spirits), for example.[123] When a king's subjects converted to Christianity they began losing faith, at least to some extent, in the role of the ancestral spirits as a force which affected their well-being. Therefore they had less need for a king to act as an intermediate. Alternatively, when a king converted, he could no longer perform his duty as a mediator without compromising his status as a Christian, so that his importance to his non-Christian subjects diminished.

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120 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 16 Jan. 1932, Eac31, AFMS, NAF. (Transl. KM)

121 See NCO Annual Report 1932, p 3, 6–8, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Copy A. J. Werth [Administrator of SWA] to the Prime Minister of South African Union 2 Sept. 1932, p. 14, par. 46, 2/12, A450, NAN.

122 McKittrick, 1995, p. 100.

123 Chapter "King and country"

Another possible way in which the missionaries' activities may indirectly have weakened the power of the traditional elite (i.e the kings and headmen), was by creating a new elite (the Ovambo pastors and teachers), to whom the Christians then transferred their loyalty. This aspect of mission work has already been discussed to some extent in earlier research, which has brought to light the anxiety of the colonial administration and the traditional elite over the increasing following gathered by the new elite. In some cases the new elite's wish to gain secular power was also noted.[124]

The colonial administration was indeed concerned about the status of the kings and headmen and it constantly accused the missionaries in the 1920s and 1930s of eroding the "tribal discipline and order" which was regarded as essential for the smooth running of indirect rule. The administrators' basic argument was something like the following: The coming of the Anglican and Roman Catholic missions to Ovamboland in 1924 had precipitated feverish competition between the three denominations to spread their influences over as much territory as possible. This had led the Finns to encourage their adherents to establish schools at all possible places, giving many uneducated Christians a delightfully easy way of attaining power and prestige by becoming "teachers" in these new bush schools. They began gathering followers among the local people, who came to regard themselves as the teachers' adherents. The missionaries were unable to control such a large number of teachers, who could therefore enter into competition for power with the local headmen.[125] The schools were also said to have weakened the authority of parents, because they kept the children away from their duties at home.[126] Native Commissioner Hahn described the prevailing situation in 1932 by stating that the mission schools produced "scores of young half-christianized natives who are becoming an increasingly difficult lot to handle, not only by their superiors, chiefs and headmen, but also by this office, because of their disregard of proper tribal discipline and order".[127] The administration regarded people's change of affiliation from the traditional to the new elite to be a real threat, and therefore the officials occasion-

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124 See Peltola, 1958, p. 227; Houghton, 1965, p. 47, 50; Hayes, 1992, p. 303–304, 308; McKittrick, 1995, p. 143, 146–149, 167–168; Becker, 1996, p. 16; Kreike, 1996, p. 276–277; Hartmann, 1998, p. 279–280; Emmett, 1999, p. 205–207.

125 NCO Annual Report 1937, p. 14–16, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Copy NCO to the Secretary for SWA 15 June 1932 and 4 April 1933, 6/1/1, NAO, NAN; Secretary for SWA to Mission Director U. Paunu 2 June 1936, Hhd1, AFMS, NAF. See also NCO Annual Reports 1927, p. 2, 11 & 1932, p. 19 & 1935, p.11–13, 19 & 1936, p. 13, 20, 35–36 & 1946, p. 13, 11/1, NAO, NAN; NCO to Chief Native Commissioner 22 Sept. 1942, 5/7/1, NAO, NAN; Notes on a discussion at a conference held in the Administrator's Office, Windhoek, on 24 and 25 November 1936, p. 1, 7, 12, Eaj, AELCIN; Walde Kivinen's notes of his discussion with C.H.L. Hahn on 2 March 1937, Eaj, AELCIN; A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 27 Nov. 1923, Eac23, AFMS, NAF; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 25 April 1933, Eac31, AFMS, NAF; V. Alho's Annual Report 1932 (general report), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendix 1, Hha12, AFMS, NAF; Copy NCO to the Secretary for SWA 22 Jan. 1924 and 27 Aug. 1935, A489/2, SWAA, NAN.

126 NCO Annual Report 1934, p. 22, 11/1, NAO, NAN. See also V. Alho, Report on Oshigambo parish inspection 14–15 Nov 1931, Hha11, AFMS, NAF. (On the colonial administration's view concerning the authority of traditional leaders and the fear of "detribalization", see also McKittrick, 2002, p. 184–193.)

127 Copy NCO to the Secretary for SWA (confidential) 15 June 1932, 6/1/1, NAO, NAN.

ally reminded people at tribal meetings that they must obey the kings and headmen rather than the missionaries and teachers.[128] The administration also took action to remedy the situation in 1936 by ordering the Finns to close some ninety schools and to supervise their teachers more closely. Furthermore, from now on all Ovambo teachers had to be accepted by the Native Commissioner as far as their "political and tribal character" was concerned.[129] These measures were later regarded as having been effective in eliminating the threat posed by the teachers. Thus, Hahn could report in 1940 that the scramble between the missions and the "destruction of tribal order" caused by the teachers were now things of the past and the Finns were now making every endeavour to uphold "tribal authority".[130]

Hahn and other colonial officials were not the only ones who claimed that the missionaries' activities eroded the basis of the traditional elite's power. The headmen of Uukwanyama and King Martin of Ondonga were said to have complained that many mission teachers were insubordinate and seriously undermined the authority of the traditional leaders.[131] The Ovambo leader who most obviously regarded christianization, the missionaries and the new elite as a threat to his position was nevertheless King Iipumbu, who sometimes said this quite plainly. Thus, a few months after his dethronement, he explained the reasons for his downfall in the following manner:

> "The missionaries are also to be blamed... They have taken all my people. I have had much trouble with the mission because they always tried to make me small."[132]

About a year earlier he expressed his view of the missionaries' role to the Uukwambi missionary Onni Aho in a heated debate:

> "Christianity has spread too much. It will not spread any more. It will destroy old customs and the whole realm. The Catholics have come in peace; they have not caused chaos or unruliness.... You are stupid. You are a child and yet you want to rule my kingdom. Show me where is the border between your Christian country and my heathen country. My country is heathen and all my subjects follow the traditions of our ancestors. Christianity has spread too much, it has gained too much power, and it must not spread any more.... Heathenism is better than Christianity. You have so many unnecessary *iidhila* [taboos] and rules. Nobody can follow them... The Christians do not obey. God sees that you are wrong. Therefore he burned down your mission station. God has given me

128 A. Hänninen to K. A. Paasio 13 Sept. 1935 and W. Kivinen to K.A. Saarilahti 2–6 Oct. 1935, Eac36, AFMS, NAF; Notes for an address by His Honour [the Administrator] to the Ukuambi 2 July 1936, 5/2/1, NAO, NAN.

129 NCO Annual Report 1936, p. 15, 11/1, NAO, NAN.

130 NCO Annual Report 1940, p. 20, 22, 2/18, A450, NAN.

131 NCO Annual Reports 1927, p. 2 & 1932, p. 19 & 1934, p. 22 & 1935, p. 19 & 1937, p. 15, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Copy NCO to the Secretary for SWA 4 April 1933, 6/1/1, NAO, NAN; A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 27 Nov. 1923, Eac23, AFMS, NAF.

132 Sworn statement of Ipumbu, ex-chief of Ukuambi, s.d. (Dec. 1932), 5/2, NAO, NAN.

> my realm because I am heathen, and I shall remain heathen.... The next king can do what he wants. Your kingdom has its own ways but they are not wanted here."[133]

It was not only Iipumbu's words which show that he regarded christianization as a threat to his position, as his deeds also bear witness to this[134] . We can begin with the fact that he took not infrequently action against local teachers who were members of the new Ovambo elite, and at the same time far more under his jurisdiction than the missionaries.[135] But that was not all. His frequent changes of attitude towards the Christians and missionaries can also be explained as attempts to maintain his subjects' loyalty. He ruled a country where there were two sub-groups whose relations were sometimes antagonistic. Therefore, in order to keep the non-Christian group happy, he was occasionally nasty to the Christians. The missionaries sometimes, although rarely, explained the king's actions by claiming that he was not personally against Christians but, as a politician, used his anti-Christian outbursts to keep his non-Christian subjects satisfied.[136] Iipumbu also used this explanation to defend himself on one occasion. In 1927 a group of people held a loud demonstration near the Elim station because the Christians had buried a child during *ohango*, an act which brought bad luck. Afterwards the king told the local missionary that he had allowed the demonstration to take place just to show people that he defended ancestral customs. A little later, probably to appease the Christians, he allowed the mission to found schools in two new districts.[137] Iipumbu also reckoned with the reactions of his non-Christian subjects in his dealings with the missionaries, as was seen in 1913, when he wanted to learn about the basics of Christian doctrine but at the same time made sure that neither his subjects nor even his advisers would know anything about his interest.[138] But the "anti-Christians" were not the only group whose loyalty worried Iipumbu. He also had to act in a way that would not make him lose the support of the Christians or those who had leanings towards the new religion. There is no downright proof of this, but it is interesting to notice that a couple of times when Iipumbu's attitude was said to have become more favourable towards Christians, the change was preceded by something which indicated that their position in the community, or in the king's immediate sphere, had been strengthening. Thus, when the king pro-

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133 O. Aho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF. (Transl. KM)

134 Cf. Hartmann, 1998, p. 279–280, 287.

135 In one particular case, which took place in 1921, the local missionary even reported that Iipumbu expelled one teacher because he felt that this had begun to behave as if he was a local "parallel king" (see Mmm 30 Aug. 1921, Appendix 1, Hha8, AFMS, NAF).

136 See O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 5 March 1931, Eac30; V. Alho's Annual Report 1927 (general report), mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendix 1, Hha10. Both in AFMS, NAF; Haahti, Hannu, Kertomus Ambomaalle tehdystä tarkastusmatkasta 1911–1912, p. 41, Lb, AELCIN. ** King Shanika na Shilongo of Ongandjera seem also to have adopted somewhat similar tactics. It was once reported that when he tried to please both the Christians and non-Christians, he spoke out strongly against the converts in public, although privately he told them that their conversions were quite acceptable to him. (See E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 8 Feb. 1927, Eac27, AFMS, NAF.)

137 E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 15 June 1927, Eac27, AFMS, NAF.

138 K. Koivu to M. Rautanen 5 Dec. 1913, Eac18, AFMS, NAF.

claimed in 1920 that people could freely attend schools, this was caused, according to Saari, by the fact that so many young men had converted as migrant labourers notwithstanding Iipumbu's earlier violent acts against migrant converts.[139] Similarly, when the king promised the missionaries a total freedom of action in 1926, it came just after a group of his young courtiers, together with a considerable number of young women, had fled Uukwambi in order to be baptised. At this time nine of his children had also begun studying at mission schools.[140]

The missionaries denied that they had any role in weakening the traditional authorities when they answered the accusations which the administration made against them. It was pointed out that Christians were faithful subjects of their kings and headmen, and that the missionaries always emphasised obedience to the secular government, both indigenous and colonial. Furthermore, they claimed that the colonial administration itself had curtailed the kings' power far more than they had.[141] Their denial of guilt does not mean, however, that the missionaries had not realised that their activities in reality weakened the authority of the traditional elite, for Koivu had already noted in 1911 that some catechumens believed that they no longer had any obligations towards the indigenous rulers once they had been baptised.[142] Somewhat later, the presiding missionary, Alho, and the mission director, Paunu, expressed the view that mission work obviously affected the status of the traditional elite, albeit unintentionally, because the missionaries brought people "civilization" and new ideas that were contrary to the heathenism which the traditional elite tried to maintain.[143]

In principle, the missionaries did not want to weaken the power of the traditional elite. The main idea, which they also reminded their adherents of occasionally, was that Christians, too, were subjects of the kings and headmen. They had to obey the indigenous rulers and fulfil their obligations towards them as long as the rulers did not demand them to do anything which would have compromised their Christian faith or morals.[144] That was apparently a principle which not all the missionaries believed in. A couple of them felt that the Ovambo teachers were too

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139 H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 25 March 1920, Eac22, AFMS, NAF.

140 H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 28 June 1926, Eac26; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus tarkastusmatkasta länsiheimoihin 15–27.6.1926 (parish inspections in western communities, Uukwambi inspection), Hha9. Both in AFMS, NAF.

141 Some remarks to the report 1937 of the Government of SWA in regard to the mission work in Ovamboland by Central Committee Finnish Mission Ovamboland, April 1939, p. 3–4, Eaj, AELCIN; Kivinen, Walde, Das Untergraben der Auktorität der eingeborenen Häuptlinge, s.d. (1936 or 1937), Hhb3, AFMS, NAF; W. Kivinen to the Secretary for SWA 8 March 1937 ("Some remarks on account of the report of the conference in Windhuk 24–25 of November 1936"), A489/2, SWAA, NAN.

142 Koivu, Kalle, Miten lähettien on suhtautuminen maakalaishallituksiin (what stance missionaries should take to native rulers), mmm 22 Sept. 1911, Appendix 11, Hha6, AFMS, NAF.

143 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 2 Sept 1929, Eac29; Mmm 26–28 Aug. 1937 §4, Appendix 2a, Hha15. Both in AFMS, NAF.

144 See A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 27 Nov. 1923, Eac23; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 5 March 1931, Eac30; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 30 Aug. 1932, Eac31; W. Kivinen to K.A. Saarilahti 2–6 Oct. 1935, Eac36; Koivu, Kalle, Miten lähettien on suhtautuminen maakalaishallituksiin, mmm 22 Sept. 1911, Appendix 11, Hha6; Mmm14 Sept to 6 Oct 1925 §31, Hha9; V. Alho, parish inspection in Onayena 11–12 Aug. 1934, Hha12. All in AFMS, NAF. Varis, 1988, p. 46–47.

timid in front of the traditional rulers, and therefore teacher training should have produced teachers who were "subordinates of Christ", more willing to oppose the secular rulers when necessary.[145] More important, however, was the reservation which the missionaries made in their principles because they had a very extensive way of defining what was contrary to the Christian faith or morals. A few examples in this respect should make the point. When King Iipumbu in 1921 ordered Christians to work on Sunday, probably in order to test their loyalty, most of them refused, apparently on the advice of the local missionary, Heikki Saari. He also refused to obey Iipumbu's temporary ban on prayer meetings.[146] Two years later in Uukwaluudhi, non-Christians in one district asked the Christians to leave their homes for one day so that a certain rite could be performed without the Christians seeing it. The missionary Järvinen forbade the Christians to leave, even after the king's principle wife had demanded it. According to him, it would have been against "God's word" for Christians to assist in the performance of "idolatry" by leaving their homes.[147] A few years later King Shanika of Ongandjera ordered an Ovambo teacher to move to another location, but Lehto ordered the teacher not to obey because he believed that the order had been given to make way for Roman Catholics, and it was only after lengthy negotiations that Lehto finally agreed to allow the teacher to move.[148] The last example is from Uukwaluudhi, where King Mwaala decided in 1935 to fine the Christians because some of them had threshed their corn before the king had given general permission to do so. Aho tried to negotiate over the matter with Mwaala, but the king refused to rescind his order. After this Aho forbade the Christians to pay their fines, and none of them did so, even though they were threatened by the king's men. Mwaala eventually gave up, but only after Aho had threatened to inform Hahn about the dispute.[149] In all the above cases the missionaries publicly defied orders by royals which had been given in accordance with indigenous laws and which, to my mind, were not contrary to the Christian faith or morals. It quite possible that their public acts against the indigenous rulers set an example also for ordinary Ovambo Christians.

So far we have found out that the missionaries' activities no doubt undermined the prestige of the indigenous rulers, to some extent at least. Both the colonial administration and the members of the old elite claimed that it did, and missionaries also occasionally admitted it. But let us elaborate on one aspect of this matter a little

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145 H. Saari to M. Tarkkanen 14 March 1927, Eac27 and A. Hänninen to M. Tarkkanen 20 July 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF.

146 H. Saari to the Board of Directors of the FMS 3 March 1921, Eac22, AFMS, NAF.

147 A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 27 Nov. 1923, Eac23, AFMS, NAF. (The rite in question was apparently a special ohango arranged for a pregnant girl.)

148 E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 30 Aug. 1928, Eac28 and E. Lehto's Annual Report 1928 (Ongandjera), mmm 21 Jan. 1929, unnumbered appendix, Hha10, AFMS, NAF.

149 O. Aho to K.A. Paasio 4 Oct. 1935, Eac36 & O. Aho's Annual Report 1935 (Uukwaluudhi), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 37, Hha14, AFMS, NAF. ** This was neither the first nor the last time that the Uukwaluudhi missionaries questioned fines which the king had imposed on Christians. (See O. Aho's Annual Report 1934, mmm 9–10 Jan. 1935, Appendix 36, Hha13 & S. Aarni, Report on Uukwaluudhi parish inspection 26 June 1946, Hha21, AFMS, NAF.)

further with a couple of points. How, or to what extent, did the new Ovambo elite erode the prestige and power of the traditional elite or, in the case of the Uukwanyama, Uukwambi and Ombalantu councillor headmen, the quasi-traditional elite?

We can start with the question of the drive for political power. Did the teachers and pastors want to become leaders outside their proper sphere of congregational and teaching duties? As far as this question is concerned, the missionary sources are rather limited, and their reliability is slightly questionable because of the excessive habit the missionaries had for seeing unacceptable pride in their adherents. Still, it can be said that a number of teachers seem to have had aspirations to become secular leaders as well. Every now and then the missionaries reported that some teachers were very self-assertive, or had a tendency to behave as if they were rulers of some kind.[150] One thing worth noting in these reports is that they often refer to teachers working in remote areas. Thus, the administration's order that missionaries must supervise their teachers better may well have been a product of the prevailing situation in faraway areas, where the teachers tried to rule the people. But there were also dominant teachers in more central areas. Vilho Ueyulu (son of King Ueyulu ya Hedimbi of Uukwanyama), who was appointed a headman of Western Uukwanyama in 1938, was obviously one of them. Even when only a teacher he was already said to have been a very stern disciplinarian whom Christians were afraid of, and as a headman, according to local Christians, he was a greedy man who imposed illegal fines.[151] The Ovambo pastors appear to have been less interested in secular leadership than the teachers, but not even they were totally without such aspirations. A good example in this respect is the pastor who worked in the remote community of Uukolonkadhi in the 1920s and 1930s. He was temporary defrocked in 1930 when he had illegally taken it upon himself to decide which of the local people could use the common wells and had kept unwanted users away with a rifle.[152]

The second elaborating point concerns the prestige of the new elite. If Ovambo pastors and teachers were a threat to the position of the traditional elite, they surely had to be respected at least by the Christians. Most of the pastors I interviewed stated that the Christians, and most non-Christians, too, had a high respect for both teachers and pastors, the latter in particular: "Even our [Ondonga] kings looked on pastors as very important and great men. Maybe even like the kings", as

150 See V. Alho to K.A. Paasio 25 Jan. 1922, Eac23; R. Rautanen to M: Tarkkanen 22 March 1924, Eac24; T. Vapaavuori to M. Tarkkanen 23 Jan. 1933, Eac31; R. Rautanen's Annual Report 1923 (general report), mmm 8 Jan. 1924, Appendix 5, Hha8; S. Hirvonen's Annual Report 1935 (Uukwanyama schools), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 25, Hha14; S. Hirvonen's Annual Report 1936 (Uukwanyama schools), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1937, Appendix 11, Hha15; A. Kekki's Annual Report 1949 (Ombalantu), mmm 25–26 Jan. 1950, Appendix 31, Hha22. All in AFMS, NAF.

151 A. Hänninen to U. Paunu 14 April 1938, Eac38 and J. Syrjä to T. Vapaavuori 8 Aug. 1947, Eac42, AFMS, NAF. There were also two other teachers in Uukwanyama around the same time who behaved like headmen in their locations and were said to keep local Christians loyal to them by fear. (A. W. Björklund to U. Paunu 12 Feb. 1940, Eac39, AFMS, NAF.)

152 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 13 March 1930, Eac30, AFMS, NAF.

Efraim Angula put it. Natanael Shinana also explained the reason for such respect: "It is in our national character to respect ordinary people who have reached positions of leadership. Wherever a pastor went, people showed him respect even if they were not necessarily receptive to his message."[153] They were all speaking of their own experiences, which means that they were describing the situation after the Second World War. A high respect for teachers and their role as leaders during this period has also been reported by some other observers,[154] but respect for Christian leaders was by no means absolute, because during the revival pastors were accused of misleading people,[155] while during the first stages of the liberation struggle some of them were accused of being opposed to the people's just aspirations.[156]

In Efraim Angula's view, people's respect for members of the new elite had been greater before World War II than after it. Although written information regarding a possible change in the status of this elite is quite scattered and incomplete, I would still question this interpretation, as it would seem that teachers and pastors were less trusted and respected before the war than after it. Several small streams of data allow us to drift towards this conclusion. We can start with the missionaries' views. It was not at all uncommon for them to report to their superiors in Helsinki that ordinary Christians had little trust or respect for Ovambo teachers or pastors.[157] The credibility of these reports is somewhat questionable, though, because some of the missionaries expressing such views were ones who believed that the Ovambo pastors were incapable of working independently. Still, it is beyond reasonable doubt that quite a few members of the Christian elite had difficulties in establishing a respected position above the rank-and-file. At least the Ovambo pastors were far less respected than the missionaries, and therefore the Christians could still complain in the early 1930s that their children "had been baptised only by an African"[158]. But even without any comparison with the missionaries, some Ovambo pastors had obvious difficulties in making themselves respected. This is shown by

153 Efraim Angula, interviewed on 17 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga; Frans Kaukondi, interviewed on 7 Dec. 1998 at Onemanya, Ongandjera; Titus Ngula interviewed on 19 Nov. 1998 at Oshitaji, Ondonga; Natanael Shinana, interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama.

154 Tötemeyer, 1978, p. 178–179; Harlech-Jones, 1986, p. 35.

155 Johannes Kalenga, interviewed on 7 Dec. 1998 at Etilyasa, Ongandjera.

156 E.g. B. Eriksson to O. Vuorela 19 May 1960, Eac48 and A. Hukka to O. Vuorela 20 April 1962, Eac49, AFMS, NAF. Some hostility towards pastors seem to have already existed in the mid-1950s. (See J. Marttunen's Annual Report 1955 [Uukwanyama], mmm 10–12 Jan. 1956, Appendix 10, Hha27, AFMS, NAF)

157 E.g. A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 27 Nov. 1923 & 15 March 1924 & 5 Oct. 1924, Eac23–24; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista länsiheimoissa ja Uukwanyamassa 1932 (Uukwaluudhi parish inspection 9–10 Aug. 1930), Eac30; V. Nieminen to M. Tarkkanen 1 March 1932, Eac31; I. Saukkonen to U. Paunu 6 Aug. 1936, Eac37; V. Alho to U. Paunu 12 Sept. 1938, Eac38; I. Saukkonen's Annual Report 1928 (Oshigambo– Oshitayi), mmm 21 Jan. 1929, unnumbered appendix, Hha10; J. Syrjä's Annual Report 1929 (Oshigambo–Oshitayi), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 18, Hha11; O. Aho's Annual Report 1933 (Uukwaluudhi–Uukolonkadhi), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1934, Appendix 28, Hha12; Mmm 26–28 June 1937 §9, Appendix 1 (Discussion concerning Ovambo pastors' work), Hha15; E. Liljeblad to the Board of Directors 18 Oct. 1932, p. 8, Hhd1. All in AFMS, NAF

158 E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 27 Dec. 1930, Eac30, AFMS, NAF.

the situation in the Oshitayi parish in Ondonga, where the Ovambo pastors seem to have had long-standing problems in keeping the local Christians under any form of control. According to Saari, the situation in Oshitayi would have remained unacceptable for ever if King Martin had not let it be known in 1939 that he would no longer tolerate the local Christians' unruly behaviour.[159] Thus in this case, the king made the Christians behave themselves while the pastors had for a long time failed to do so.

There is one particular aspect which should be remembered when discussing the pre-war social status of the new elite: Teachers were very poorly paid until the government began paying grants for their salaries from 1945 onwards.[160] In the early 1930s, for example, an untrained teacher's yearly salary was said to have been approximately the same as a migrant labourer earned in the Police Zone in one month.[161] Pastors were hardly any better off, because Pastor Filippus in Ontananga had to ask his congregation in 1935 to help him amass enough grain to send his son to study at the Onguediva boys' school.[162] In a society which regarded material wealth as a symbol of social status,[163] such pauperism hardly did much good for a person's social standing. As far as wealth was concerned, the teachers and pastors were just commoners. On the other hand, social status of the pastors in Ondonga was purposely promoted by King Martin who informed at least one regional headman in 1926, a year after the first Ovambo pastors had been ordained, that headmen had no jurisdiction over pastors living in their areas.[164] In no other community, nor in Ondonga after 1926, do there seem to have been any comparable attempts to place pastors in an immune position above the headmen, and it can therefore be assumed that pastors were normally regarded as being below headmen in status, and teachers even further below. Poverty and the modest social status may have been reasons why some members of the new elite joined the old one if they had a chance to do so. Of the 184 male teachers who graduated from the Oniipa teacher training school between 1913 and 1938, for example, seven had become either headmen or kings' advisers by 1944. Some of these could combine their role as a teacher or pastor with that of a headman, but not all. One of those who could was Pastor Paulus Hamutenya, who led a Kwanyama migration to the east in 1927 and founded a new *omukunda* and parish of Eenhana. He was then both the pastor and the headman of the Eenhana area until his death in 1932. One who failed to combine the two roles was Pastor Gideon Iitula of Okalumbu

159 W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 18 Feb. 1939 and H. Saari to U. Paunu 11 Sept. 1939, Eac 39; Mmm 11 July 1930 §12, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF.

160 See e.g. E. Lehto to U. Paunu 1 Sept. 1945 & 26 Nov. 1945 & an extract from E. Lehto's letter to an unknown recipient 29 Oct. 1945 & B. Eriksson to T. Vapaavuori 11 Nov. 1946, Eac41, AFMS, NAF; NCO Annual Report 1945, p. 7, 11/1, NAO, NAN.

161 O. Aho to the Board of Directors 29 June 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF. On teachers' financial difficulties during the first half of the 1940s see, S. Hirvonen's Annual Reports 1941(Uukwanyama schools), mmm 21–22 Jan. 1942, Appendix 24, Hha19; Ibid. 1944, mmm 17–18 Jan. 1945, Appendix 21, Hha20; Ibid. 1945, mmm 9–10 Jan. 1946, Appendix 18, Hha20. All in AFMS, NAF.

162 V. Alho to the Field Administration Board 26 April 1935, Eac36, AFMS, NAF.

163 See e.g. McKittrick, 1995, p. 136–137.

164 A. Perheentupa to M. Tarkkanen 26 June 1926, Eac26, AFMS, NAF.

(Ondonga), who was appointed headman when he was still pastor. In Viktor Alho's opinion, his role as headman led him into temptations which finally made him commit an offence of a sexual nature. The missionaries therefore forced him to choose in 1931 either to give up his headmanship or be defrocked. He chose the latter.[165]

It would obviously be wrong to claim that Ovambo Christians did not respect the teachers and pastors before the Second World War. The Ondonga pastors Pinehas Kambonde and Natanael Kapofi, for example, were said to have been very highly respected even by the royal family.[166] The respect which many Christians no doubt had for teachers and pastors was not perhaps caused so much by the formal status which they had within the Christian community, as by their behaviour. If members of the new elite were strong-willed and sharp-tongued they could gain the Christians' respect in the sense that they were feared.[167] More often, however, it seems to have been the case that the teachers and pastors who were good and kind were respected by the rank-and-file Christians while the mean, arrogant ones were detested. Let us take the parish of Onayena as an example. This had two Ovambo pastors in the late 1920s, one of whom was said to have been loved and respected by the people while the other one was not trusted. According to the missionary Perheentupa, the lack of trust in the second case was caused by the pastor's attempts to behave like a European.[168] In the next decade several teachers working in the Omangundu ward of Onayena had to leave their post there because of local hostility towards them. The exact reasons for the hostility were not reported, but Alho gives us to understand that it was basically caused by the local Christians' desire to live like heathens.[169] Be that as it may, hostility towards teachers was sometimes caused by their own unworthy behaviour. This happened in Ongandjera, for example, where the local Christians once turned to the king (instead of the missionaries) in order to rid themselves of one cruel teacher. To their satisfaction, the king banished him.[170]

If the social status of the new elite, and the respect shown for them, was higher after World War II than before it, as would appear to have been the case, then we can draw two conclusions. Firstly, the fears which the colonial administration expressed, particularly in the 1930s, concerning the traditional elite's loss of author-

165 L[iina] L[indström], Henkilötietoja Oniipan seminaarin käyneistä opettajista vuosilta 1913–1938, historical data on people, AELCIN; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 8 June 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF; V. Alho's Annual Report 1931 (general report) & A. Hänninen's Annual Report 1931 (Uukwanyama), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendices 1 and 25, Hha11, AFMS, NAF; Kreike, 1996, p. 383.

166 W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 25 Feb. 1938, Eac38, AFMS, NAF.

167 Walter Björklund reported from Uukwanyama in 1938 that most local teacher-preachers were zealots who harshly reprimanded and threatened Christians even for the smallest wrongdoings. As a consequence, their attendance at prayer meetings was good, but it was not caused by a "fear for God" but by a fear of these teachers. (W. Björklund to U. Paunu 15 Dec. 1938, Eac38, AFMS, NAF.)

168 A. Perheentupa's Annual Report 1927 (Onayena), mmm 18–19 Jan. 1928, Appendix 16, Hha10, AFMS, NAF.

169 V. Alho to U. Paunu 12 Sept. 1938, Eac38, AFMS, NAF.

170 Johannes Kalenga, interviewed on 7 Dec. 1998 at Etilyasa, Ongandjera.

ity because of the teachers and pastors were not totally unfounded, but they were exaggerated. To my mind, the Christians were not quite so entirely under the teachers' control as the colonial reports claim. Secondly, it is interesting to note that the prestige of the new elite seems to have improved at the same time as that of both the missionaries and the kings/headmen was on the decline. Concerning the latter group, McKittrick has shown that the administration's tightening control over the kings and headmen, particularly after the 1940s, made many people dislike them.[171] In her interpretation, "[c]ommunity dislike for the rulers colonialists defined as 'traditional' probably hastened the transference of allegiances to those things deemed non-traditional".[172] This view would seem to be basically correct. In due course people became disillusioned with both the new extraneous elite (i.e. the missionaries) and the old indigenous elite. When they then searched for new leaders, they found them in a new indigenous elite. Therefore, the new elite created by the mission was partly the cause of the downfall of the traditional elite, because it became an alternative source of guidance for people. Yet its heightened status after World War II was at least partly a consequence of the declining prestige of the old elite, caused by its close association with the colonial power.

When summarizing the effects of missionaries' activities on the role and prestige of the traditional Ovambo elite, one must first point out that they had no manifested agenda to destabilize the traditional elite, neither do they seem to have had any hidden agenda. They did occasionally question decisions by kings and headmen in public, however, thus obviously setting an example to their adherents. More important, though, was the fact that they created a new elite of teachers and pastors who became an alternative source of leadership for the people. These new leaders began challenging the role of the old ones, particularly when people became disillusioned with their traditional rulers. But even this indirect effect must not be exaggerated, as it was only one force which was eroding traditional rule. Another obvious factor was labour migration, which brought in new ideas that questioned the old social system. Even Native Commissioner Hahn sometimes had to admit that labour migration was weakening the power of the traditional elite,[173] even though, as a member of the colonial administration, he apparently wanted to understate its negative effects[174]. Alongside labour migration, it was in fact colonial rule itself which eroded the power of kings and headmen more than did the missionaries' activities. The South Africans toppled two Ovambo kings and, from the late 1930s, the native commissioners began involving themselves more directly in the internal

171 McKittrick, 1995, p. 162–164; McKittrick, 2002, p. 198.
172 McKittrick, 1995, p. 178. (Also McKittrick, 2002, p. 198–199)
173 E.g. NCO Annual Report 1930, p. 17 and NCO Annual Report 1946, p. 13, 11/1, NAO, NAN.
174 Hahn's conversation with the presiding missionary Walde Kivinen is an example of his tendency to try to play down the negative effects of labour migration. Kivinen claimed that headmen were caused the most trouble by young men who had been in the south. Hahn admitted that there may have been some detribalizing agitation coming from the south but it had very little effect, because, as he put it, most returning labourers soon adapted to tribal life again. (Walde Kivinen's notes concerning his discussion with C.H.L. Hahn, 2 March 1937, Eaj, AELCIN.)

administrative affairs of communities. This latter aspect was seen, for example, in Hahn's attempts to have younger men promoted to positions of leadership in Ongandjera and Uukwaluudhi,[175] and in his involvement in the Ondoga succession in 1942[176]. Neither the missionaries nor the members of the new elite were in a positions to do anything like this.

Conflict issues

The struggle over Ohango

The girls' initiation rite, ohango (efundula), which was briefly described earlier, was one of the most important Ovambo rites. It was also one which the missionaries, Anglican and Roman Catholic[177] as well as Lutheran, strongly opposed as unchristian. Christians' participation in ohango was strictly forbidden, and there were no attempts to christianize the rite[178]. One request by Emil Liljeblad to the Resident Commissioner is a good example of how strongly the Finnish missionaries felt about ohango. Liljeblad informed the Resident Commissioner in 1918 that an ohango, "a vast dirty pigstall (sic)", was to be organized in Ondonga, and asked Major Manning to save the "British honour" by forbidding it. If his command was not obeyed, the major was to have sent troops to disperse the gathering.[179]

The missionaries had already decided in 1888 that Christian girls who participated in ohango would be excommunicated,[180] and the same punishment was laid down in the first church regulations of 1924, which also ordered anybody who sent a girl to ohango to be excommunicated. Thus, according to these regulations, participation in ohango was an equally grave offence as murder. Also assisting in ohango in any way, and participation in any events (dances or feasts) connected with it, were punishable offences.[181] Later other more detailed regulations were given: e.g. a girl who had been excommunicated could be readmitted after two years if she had been forced into ohango, but the excommunication time was to be longer if she had participated in it voluntarily. Unlike in other cases of excommunication, readmission of those excommunicated because of ohango could not be

175 McKittrick, 1995, p. 160–163; McKittrick, 2002, p. 194–196.

176 NCO Annual Report 1942, p. 3, 11/1, NAO, NAN.

177 Pater H. Bücking to E. Lehto, s.d 1947, Hhd1, AFMS, NAF; Rev. G. Dymond, Rev. W. Turvey and Rev. A. Björklund to Ass. NCO 24 July 1946, 5/7/1, NAO, NAN; Hayes, 1992, p. 169, 305; McKittrick, 2002, p. 213.

178 Some missionary societies, albeit only a few, tried to purge the indigenous African initiation rites of unacceptable elements and then accepted them as Christian rites as well. (See Teinonen, 1949, p. 63–66; Kaplan, 1986, p. 174–177.)

179 E. Liljeblad to RCO 15 Oct. 1918, 4/1916/6 (vol.5), RCO, NAN.

180 Teinonen, 1949, p. 45–46.

181 Ambomaan Evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon järjestyssäännöt 1924 §48 and 51, Hhc2, AFMS, NAF. The first instance punishment for assisting in ohango was a warning from the local missionary, but sometimes even rather insignificant offences might lead to excommunication. For example, one Onayena man was excommunicated in 1927 because he had an "ohango spear" at home. (Minutes of the church administration 15 Dec. 1927 §1, Hha9, AFMS, NAF.)

decided upon by the parish elders, but the decision had to be made by the central administration of the church. No woman who had ever participated in ohango could be married in church, but instead the wedding ceremony was to take place in the church office. And finally, teachers were given the right in the 1940s to expel from school any pupil who had visited events connected with ohango.[182]

Forbidding Christians from participating in ohango was not the only thing missionaries did to fight against the rite. They also tried to influence rulers so that Christian girls would not be forced to go through this initiation. Such diplomatic measures were used particularly in Ondonga where the king was Christian. In 1920, for example, the missionaries asked King Martin to forbid the taking of Christian girls to ohango. Although the king expected that the "elders" of the community would not allow actions to be taken against ohango, he still agreed and gave an ultimatum. He also fined some people who forced their Christian relatives to participate in the rite, but the king's actions had little effect because a considerable number of Christian or catechumen girls still participated in it. A similar ineffectual ultimatum was issued in 1928.[183] In the mid-1930s, when Ondonga held its biggest ohango in more than twenty years, Martin no longer bothered to do anything. Viktor Alho suspected that he was remaining passive because Native Commissioner Hahn was favouring ohangos. Alternatively, and more probably, the king, who was an excommunicate himself at the time, did not want to find himself in conflict with his mother, Frieda (Mutaleni), who was an active promotor of this ohango.[184]

In the long run the missionaries' attempts to abolish ohango, or at least to prevent Christians from participating in it, proved rather futile, but they did create conflicts at many levels[185] because many Christian girls participated in it. There were conflicts between Christians and non-Christians, between Christians and Christians, between missionaries and non-Christians and, finally, between missionaries and Christians. Obviously not all Christian or catechumen girls participated, but it is impossible to estimate what proportions did or did not. The only thing that can be said is that the missionaries' writings have such a proliferation of references to problems caused by ohango that participation by Christians was evidently very far from being uncommon.

Those Christian girls who did participate in ohango did not form an uniform group. With some simplification, they can be placed in four categories: 1) girls who went to ohango more or less voluntarily, 2) girls who were persuaded or

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182 Minutes of the church administration board 3 March 1936 §2, Hha14; S. Hirvonen's Annual Report 1940 (Uukwanyama schools), mmm 22–23 Jan. 1941, Appendix 26, Hha19; Ambomaan Evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon järjestyssäännöt 1929/38 §34, Hhc2. All in AFMS, NAF. Minutes of the men's days 25–26 Oct 1933 §11, Nba4, AELCIN.

183 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 15 Nov. 1920, Eac22; E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 17 Nov. 1920, Eac22; R. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 14 Nov. 1920, Eac22; I. Saukkonen to M. Tarkkanen 28 May 1928, Eac28; W. Björklund to M. Tarkkanen 9 Jan. 1929, Eac29; Minutes of the field administration board 26 July 1920 §3, Hha8; All in AFMS, NAF.

184 See V. Alho to K. A. Paasio 21 Jan. 1935 and V. Alho to the Ovamboland church administration 24 April 1935, Eac36, AFMS, NAF.

185 Cf. e.g. Loeb, 1962, p. 244; McKittrick, 1998, p. 257–258; McKittrick, 2002, p. 216–218.

The initiation rite, Ohango, was the most important ceremony in a woman's life, as it gave her the right to give birth to socially acceptable children. It was therefore important to ensure that none of the participating girls was pregnant at the time of initiation. To prove their virginity, the girls had to be able to stamp corn for hours in the hot sun without fainting. Should a girl fail this test, she was beaten and thrown out of the ceremony for bringing disgrace on her kin and the whole community. (Photo by courtesy of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission)

forced to do so by their Christian relatives, 3) girls who were persuaded or forced to do so by their non-Christian relatives, and 4) girls who were forced to do so by the elite of their community. Concerning the fourth group, King Iipumbu of Uukwambi and King Sheya of Ongandjera seem to have been particularly active in the 1930s.[186] For the former, promoting ohango obviously was a form of anti-missionary and anti-European activity, while the latter was prepared to follow the example of the former as long as he seemed to be successful. But more generally speaking, desire of the traditional elite to ensure that Christian girls also participated in ohango was not just an expression of anti-missionary or anti-European feelings, because this attitude prevailed even when anti-European feelings were not

186 E.g. O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 5 March 1931 and to the board of directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30; O. Suikkanen's Annual Reports 1930 and 1931 (Ongandjera), mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931, Appendix 30 and mmm 13–14 Jan. 1932, Appendix 38, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF.

particularly on the agenda.[187] When it comes to the dichotomy of voluntary/forced participation, it is again impossible to give any exact estimates of which was dominant. The missionaries usually reported about conflicts to their superiors, and therefore their writings tended to emphasize forced participation, particularly cases in which girls were forced into ohango by non-Christian relatives. On the other hand, the few writings which make comparisons between voluntary and forced instances point out that, if not the majority, then at least a considerably large minority of the Christian girls who took part in ohango did so more or less willingly.[188]

What is interesting in the Ovambo Christians' reaction to the missionaries' fight against ohango is that they practically never openly questioned the missionaries' views concerning it. The grounds for the prohibition were never discussed at synodal meetings, for example. This might indicate that the Christians basically agreed with the missionaries that ohango was something unchristian. A more probable reason, however, is that the missionaries never allowed any discussion on the subject. The only Christian who, as far as I know, openly challenged the missionaries in this matter was Frieda, Queen Mother of Ondonga, who sent a message to the presiding missionary before the synodal meeting in 1931 stating that she did not understand why ohango and the wedding ox should be forbidden. She also informed Alho that she did not regard herself as bound by any decisions which the synodal meeting might take concerning these rites.[189]

Instead of openly challenging the missionaries, many Christians simply ignored the ban on ohango, or were forced to ignore it. Christian girls obviously found themselves in a difficult situation; what ever they did, they were bound to become outcasts of one or other of the groups that made their social networks. If they refused to participate in ohango, they got into trouble with their non-Christian relatives, but if they did participate, they became apostates in the eyes of the Christians. The situation was somewhat easier for those who were catechumens, as there are some pieces of information indicating that (at least some) parents allowed girls to convert if they agreed to participate in ohango before baptism.[190]

Around 1950 the missionaries seemed to be closer than ever to their goal of preventing Christians from participating in ohango. In western Ondonga, which was the most christianized part of Ovamboland, the rite was said to have no longer

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187 E.g. V. Alho to K.A. Paasio 21 Jan. 1935, Eac36; S. Aarni's Annual Report 1944 (Ongandjera), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1945, Appendix 32, Hha20; V. Alho's Annual Report 1945 (general report), mmm 9–10 Jan. 1946, Appendix 1, Hha20. All in AFMS, NAF.

188 L. Lindström to T. Vapaavuori 7 March 1948, Eac43; M. Rautanen's Annual Report 1918 (Olukonda), mmm 24 Feb. 1919, Appendix 4a, Hha7; W. Björklund's Annual Report 1928 (Onayena), mmm 21 Jan. 1929, unnumbered appendix, Hha10; T. Vapaavuori's Annual Report 1935 (Onayena), mmm 15–16 Jan. 1936, Appendix 12, Hha14; Raportti lähetysjohtajan tarkastusmatkoilta 1954 (Ombalantu parish inspection 20 Aug. 1954), Hha25. All in AFMS, NAF.

189 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 8 June 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF. (Alho also notes in this letter that discussions of "controversial issues" were being avoided at synodal meetings. This hints that the missionaries indeed were not willing to allow open discussion about ohango.)

190 O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 26 Sept. 1931, Eac30; S. Aarni to U. Paunu 9 Oct. 1936, Eac37; V. Alho to T. Vapaavuori 1 Dec. 1947, Eac42; V. Alho, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista 20–30.8. 1927 (Engela parish inspection 1927), Hha9. All in AFMS, NAF. See also McKittrick, 1995, p. 121.

been a problem because the elderly Frieda was no longer in favour of it.[191] Around the same time the Uukwanyama council of headmen and kings Ushona Shiimi of Ongandjera and Mwaala of Uukwaluudhi forbade relatives to force Christian girls to participate in ohango. They also seem to have been willing to punish those who defied this prohibition.[192] It is hardly a coincidence that traditional leaders began taking action against ohango in the late 1940s, as Hahn had recently retired and the new Native Commissioner Eedes, as has already been pointed out, was more willing than his predecessor to interfere with indigenous customs[193]. But even the combined efforts of the missionaries, Eedes and the traditional authorities (whose attempts were apparently somewhat lukewarm) were able neither to abolish ohango nor to prevent Christian girls from participating in it. This continued to happen even after 1950, as it still does today, notwithstanding the fact that it is forbidden by the Lutheran church.[194]

Since many Christians ignored the missionaries' strict ban, ohango became a source of conflict in the relationship between the missionaries and the Ovambo, not in words but in deeds. It is now time to try to discover why such a conflict could emerge, why both parties were so strongly committed to their views that no compromise was possible. Let us start with the missionaries. Why were they so strongly against ohango?

Not infrequently, but usually in a somewhat roundabout way, the missionaries claimed that the rite involved a multitude of sexual acts which were believed to ensure girls' fertility. Another claim was that ohango gave women the right to lead licentious lives.[195] The latter claim is very subjective, because it is based on the missionaries' religio-eurocentric view that any sexual act outside marriage means lechery. Their beliefs concerning sex in ohango were summarised and published by the theologian Seppo Teinonen in his book "Mission work as the reformer of Ovambo marriage" in 1949. According to Teinonen, ohango was saturated with sexual activity. There were not only indecent dances but also *doctrina et praxis matrimonii cum perforatio*. Therefore, in Teinonen's mind, ohango was not only immoral, but was

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191 Kivinen, Walde, Raportti allekirjoittaneen matkasta Afrikan sihteerinä Ambomaalle 1949–1950, (Kivinen's inspection of Ovamboland mission 1949–1950) p. 6, Dgb, AELCIN.

192 Ass. NCO (Uukwanyama) Annual Report 1948, p. 7, 12/2; Ass. NCO (Uukwanyama) report for quarter ended 30 Sept. 1950, p. 2, 12/1; Copy NCO to Shetuatha Mbashu 28 Feb. 1948, 32/7; Chief Ushona Shiimi to NCO 7 Dec. 1949, 32/7. All in NAO, NAN.

193 Hahn's opposition to his successor's more friendly general attitude towards the missions, particularly with respect to ohango, is clearly expressed in Copy C.H.L. Hahn to Mr Allen s.d. 1947, 2/11, A450, NAN.

194 E.g. Natanael Shinana, interwieved on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama; Johannes Kalenga, interviewed on 7 Dec. 1998 at Etilyasa, Ongandjera; Houghton, 1965, p. 41; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 45; Estermann, 1976, p. 69; McKittrick, 1995, p. 121, 175, 211 fn 83.

195 E.g. E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 24 Oct. 1916, Eac20; O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 15 June 1932, Eac31; Minutes of the field administration board 1 Sept. 1920 §1, Hha8; Mmm 14 Sept.– 6 Oct. 1925 §18, Hha9. All in AFMS, NAF; Laukkanen, Pauli, Ambomaan nuorisotyö (youthwork in Ovamboland) (manuscript) 26 June 1958, Serie N, AELCIN; Presiding missionary W. Kivinen to the Secretary for SWA 8 March 1937, A489/2, SWAA, NAN; Vapaavuori, 1948, p. 183; Peltola, 1958, p. 113; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 51; Hayes, 1992, p. 69, 305; McKittrick, 1995, p. 207.

also liable to spread venereal diseases.[196] In the light of our present knowledge Teinonen was clearly exaggerating the predominance of sexual acts in ohango. The missionary Jalmari Hopeasalmi, for example, who has written one of the most detailed descriptions of ohango in Finnish, does not mention anything about sex in the initiation itself.[197] It is apparent that the male and female masters of the initiation (*namunganga*) had sexual intercourse with each other in order to ensure the girls' fertility,[198] but sex with the initiates (i.e. *praxis matrimonii cum perforatio*) is another matter. According to Tuupainen, sexual intercourse with the girls seems to have been absent in Ondonga, Uukwanyama and Uukwambi, but was common in the western communities.[199] Juntunen questions Tuupainen's finding because the Liljeblad collection, which she used, has no clear references to sex with initiates in any communities.[200] Her view is probably closer to the truth than Tuupainen's, because at least in Ongandjera sex with initiates seems to have been strictly forbidden.[201] Therefore, all in all, the claim made both by the missionaries and by Teinonen that ohango was a rite with an abundance of sex is clearly incorrect.

Ohango had a public part with dances and feasts, but the actual initiation rites were secret. Nobody who had participated in them was allowed to reveal the details to outsiders,[202] and Christian girls hardly ever spoke about the rite, even to the female missionaries.[203] What is notable about most descriptions of ohango, particularly the older ones written by missionaries, is that they concentrate on the public part of the rite. Thus one may ask whether the missionaries in fact knew enough about the content of ohango to make a well-grounded case against it. It would seem that they did not[204]. This became evident in the 1920s, when Hahn asked the missionaries for information about Ovambo customs, and Nestori Wäänänen wrote to him about ohango. He noted first that the rite was secret, but he also claimed that "it seems to be sure that there are (sic) much which confirm superstition and heathen feeling and which is dirty". Finally Wäänänen admitted that if such dirty things did occur in ohango, they were done in secret.[205] The missionaries' lack of adequate knowledge about ohango was also noted by the mission director, Tarkkanen. During his inspection visit in 1925 he expressed the opinion that girls who had participated in ohango should not be excommunicated unless more is known about what happens in it.[206] The general ignorance about ohango became evident again in the late 1930s, when the presiding missionary, Walde

196 Teinonen, 1949, p. 26–28, 67–68.
197 Hopeasalmi, 1946, p. 75–82.
198 Tuupainen, 1970, p. 48; Juntunen, 2002, p. 22–23.
199 Tuupainen, 1970, p. 49. A strict ban on sex with initiates in Uukwanyama is also mentioned by Brincker, 1900, p. 49.
200 Juntunen, 2002, p. 29.
201 ELC no. 931, p. 1360.
202 E.g. Teinonen, 1949, p. 27; Juntunen, 2002, p. 29, 37.
203 Vapaavuori, 1948, p. 184.
204 Here I strongly disagree with Peltola, who claimed in his "History of the FMS work in Africa" that Finnish missionaries even in the 1880s "were apparently well aware of what actually happened in this secret ritual". (Peltola, 1958, p. 114)
205 Nestori Wäänänen, The Customs of Ovambo (typescript), 30 Dec. 1926, 2/35, A450, NAN.
206 Mmm 14 Sept. – 6 Oct. 1925 §18, Hha9, AFMS, NAF.

Kivinen, wrote to the secretary for SWA to defend the missionaries' deprecatory approach to many Ovambo customs, including ohango. Kivinen failed to give any actual reason why the missionaries opposed ohango, but just maintained vaguely that it included magic practices which were "so unclean and immoral that everyone who cares of purity of his soul does not like to hear about them, least of all to write of them".[207] It is obvious that the missionaries had little idea what actually took place in ohango, and yet they had been strongly opposed to the rite from the beginning of their work. Thus, there was a fair share of truth in the opinion of Native Commissioner Hahn when he wrote in 1947 that the missionaries opposed anything native as being unchristian, and simply because ohango was native the missionaries wanted it to be smashed up and wiped out.[208]

Opposing an indigenous rite without knowing much about it is again a good example of the Finnish missionaries' attitude to the Ovambo and their culture. Having once decided that ohango was evil, they no longer had any need to prove its evilness, nor did any of them ever really question this. Juntunen has suggested that knowledge of the fact that some parts of ohango were strictly secret may have led the missionaries to assume that it must have had some unacceptable elements in it.[209] This may well be true. The missionaries adopted this idea some time during the early stages of their stay in Ovamboland and it then became an unquestionable "fact"[210]. It was not questioned because the missionary community was very hierarchical and the junior members were not expected to suspect the judgements of their seniors. Therefore, to my mind, the claim that ohango was something unchristian and evil was, to a considerable extent at least, nothing but a missionary myth.

Even if ohango had been filled with sex, that would not have been the actual reason why the missionaries opposed it. During their stay in Ovamboland they had come to realise how very central ohango obviously was for the Ovambo society, and this was the reason why they were so fiercely opposed to it. For the missionaries ohango was "the pillar of heathenism" (*Pakanuuden pylväs*), i.e. a rite which was central in maintaining "heathen belief", or to put it more impartially, which maintained the Ovambo indigenous social and cultural systems.[211] The missionaries therefore believed that the eradication of heathenism in Ovamboland

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207 Presiding missionary W. Kivinen to the Secretary for SWA 8 March 1937 ("Some remarks on account of the report of the conference in Windhoek 24–25 November 1936"), A489/2, SWAA, NAN.

208 Copy C.H.L. Hahn to Mr Allen, s.d. 1947, 2/11, A450, NAN.

209 Juntunen, 2002, p. 29.

210 A quote from the theologian Teinonen: " In the early stages [of mission work in any area] there is a danger that everything native is seen as heathen. When this happens, the rites of passage are often also regarded as unquestionably foreign to Christianity, and a fierce struggle against these rites is therefore mounted [by missionaries]. (Transl. KM) (Teinonen, 1949, p. 63)

211 E.g. E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 6 Dec. 1918, Eac21; V. Alho to K.A. Paasio 21 Jan. 1935, Eac36; B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1955 (general report), mmm 10–12 Jan. 1956, Appendix 1, Hha27. All in AFMS, NAF; Laukkanen, Pauli, Ambomaan nuorisotyö, 26 June 1958, p. 2, Serie N, AELCIN; Vapaavuori, 1948, p. 181 ff.; Peltola, 1958, p. 162. C.f. also Teinonen, 1949, p. 63; McKittrick, 1995, p. 173–174; Kreike, 1996, p. 271.

would be possible only after that rite had been crushed.[212] What is noteworthy in their comments concerning the central role of ohango is the lack of any attempt to analyse the rite in its social context. Ohango was simply said to be a central rite. It was obviously not the missionaries' job to do anthropological research into the Ovambo culture, but the notable absence of any analytical approach makes one wonder whether the "pillar of heathenism" was also an idea which had been adopted sometimes during the early years of mission work and which had then begun to live a life of its own without anybody ever questioning it.

Then there is the Ovambo side of the question. Why did so many of them, non-Christians in particular, but also many Christians, obstinately want the Christian girls to participate in ohango? Basically it was for the very same reason that the missionaries opposed it, i.e. it occupied such a central role in the social system. It was not only an individual rite which was important from the girls' point of view, but it was also a collective rite which was regarded as important for the well-being and survival of the whole community and its leaders. It was for this reason that the Ovambo defended it so strongly, and as the missionaries were equally obstinately opposed to it, the question of Christian participation was bound to become a major source of conflict.

The individual and communal aspects of ohango are intermingled, but for the sake of clarity it is best to try to treat both aspects separately, beginning with the individual one. Ohango was important for a woman's status in the community, because it gave her the right to give birth to legal, i.e. socially acceptable, children. Its importance in this respect is manifested by the fact that girls who became pregnant before ohango were originally killed,[213] and although the punishments were later alleviated, pre-ohango pregnancy was still a source of great shame for a girl in the 20th century, particularly in the western communities. In many cases such a girl would be banished from her community and had to get an abortion in a foreign land. Even if not banished, she would still be stigmatized for the rest of her life and would have difficulties in finding a respectable husband.[214] As long as a considerable proportion of the girls' relatives, or their compatriots, were non-Christians, the stigma attached to pregnancy in non-initiated girls was great, and it is quite understandable that many Christian girls participated in ohango precisely in order not to be ostracized.

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212 See e.g. E. Liljeblad's Annual Report 1912 (Oniipa), mmm 15 Jan. 1913, Appendix 3, Hha 6, AFMS, NAF; Teinonen, 1949, p. 18.

213 Chapter "Kin and family".

214 E.g. O. Aho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30; V. Alho to T. Vapaavuori 1 Dec. 1947, Eac42; O. Aho's Annual Report 1932 (Uukwambi), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendix 34b, Hha12; S. Aarni's Annual Report 1944 (Ukwaluudhi), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1945, Appendix 31, Hha20; Aarni, Sulo, Kertomus Uukwaluudhin seurakuntatarkastuksesta 26.6.1946 (Uukwaluudhi parish inspection), Hha21; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista Ambomaalla 1939 (Parish inspections 1939, general comments), Hhb2. All in AFMS, NAF; S. Aarni to C.H.L. Hahn 10 March 1941, 5/3, NAO, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1926, p. 12–13, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Hahn, C.H.L, Ovambo law of person (typescript), s.d., p. 8, 2/38, A450, NAN; Natanael Shinana interviewed on 1 Dec. 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama; Estermann, 1976, p. 68; McKittrick, 1995, p.190, 200, 204, 206, 210, 212–213; Juntunen, 2002, p. 76–77; McKittrick, 2002, p. 213–214.

The individual aspect of ohango, important though it was, is less important than the collective aspect when trying to explain people's reluctance (to say the least) to give it up.[215] The collective importance of ohango is well illustrated by the fact that practically none of the Christian informants described the rite in negative terms when Rev. Liljeblad was collecting information about Ovambo customs in the 1930s.[216] There are two aspects of ohango which are particularly relevant if we are to understand the communal opposition to relieving Christian girls from participating in it. Firstly, it included a large amount of magic intended to ensure the girls' fertility.[217] In a community where agriculture is labour-intensive, the women's fertility is important for the well-being of each family unit, and for the community as a whole. Secondly, pre-ohango pregnancy was not an object of great shame only for the girl but also for her kin. Furthermore, such a pregnancy was believed to place her whole kin, or even the king of the community, in mortal danger.[218] Fears of this kind still existed in the 1940s among non-Christians, at least in the western communities, as shown by two cases of infanticide. The first took place in 1941 in Ongandjera, where an young, uninitiated Kwaluudhi woman killed her child. The woman and her family had been chased out from Uukwaluudhi when her pregnancy was discovered and they had moved to Ongandjera, where the woman's mother began pressuring her to kill the baby because it was believed to bring bad luck and death to the family. After severe pressure, the woman finally agreed to kill her child. The second case took place two years later in Uukwaluudhi, where a woman killed her daughter's child because the daughter had not been initiated.[219]

The communal importance of ohango as a rite which legitimized new members is also evident in the changes which seem to have taken place in the rite in the twentieth century. Originally ohango, with its various kinds of pregnancy tests, had been a way of making sure that no non-initiated woman gave birth. If a girl was found to be pregnant in the earlier times, she was killed, while later she was banished and forced to have an abortion. Now that killings and abortions could no longer be performed, under colonial rule at least not openly, it was important to find other ways to ensure that no non-initiated girl gave birth. It therefore became customary to arrange simplified individual ohangos for girls who had become pregnant before normal initiation. In other words, one form of ohango was becoming a kind of purification rite. According to Estermann, this interpretation of ohango came into being in the 1920s.[220] The first reference to individual ohangos which I found is from 1916, when the missionary Lehto saw a large group of people in Ondonga taking a "fallen" woman to be initiated. He further stated that,

215 C.f. Loeb, 1962, 243; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 45; McKittrick, 1995, p. 206.

216 Juntunen, 2002, p. 40.

217 E.g. O. Aho to the Board of Directors of the FMS 29 June 1931, Eac30, AFMS, NAF; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 48, 51; Juntunen, 2002, p. 22–23.

218 See e.g. Hahn, C.H.L, Abortion in Ovamboland (typescript), s.d., p. 5, 2/38, A450, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1946, p. 14, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Loeb, 1962, p. 243; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 49; McKittrick, 1995, p. 174–175; Juntunen, 2002, p. 23–28, 36.

219 McKittrick, 1995, p. 190–193, 202; McKittrick, 2002, p. 214–215.

220 Estermann, 1976, p. 68.

unlike earlier, girls who had already slept with men could now participate in ohango.[221] From the 1920s onwards these "lesser" ohangos for pregnant, or possibly pregnant, uninitiated girls seem to have become a normal practice.[222]

As the above shows, ohango was a rite which was believed to secure the safe reproduction of the community. Neglecting to perform the rite jeopardized the safety of this reproduction, in fact it made it a hazard. As long as a considerable number of people believed in this, the pressure to send Christian girls to ohango was obvious. But this was not all. Several scholars have pointed out that ohango was also an important means of controlling the reproductive and social relations in Ovambo communities. Ohango maintained the "traditional" hierarchies which ensured that the men could control the women, the elite could control the commoners, and in particular, the older generation could control the younger one.[223] Indeed, it was kings or headmen who decided when ohangos were to be held, and parents who decided when their daughters would be allowed to participate in one.[224] This again is obviously a relevant phenomenon from the point of view of the strong Ovambo drive to conserve ohango. Those in power did not want to lose the rite, as it was a cornerstone of their control over subordinate groups. This might explain why the Christian Queen Mother Frieda of Ondonga, who was a prominent figure in the royal clan and apparently also the de facto ruler of the community, was so keen to defend ohango.

To sum up the struggle over ohango, one must again stress that the rite had a central place in the Ovambo social system. That was why the missionaries were opposed to it. They believed that christianization could not be completed before the rite had been eradicated, but for the same reason the Ovambo, particularly the non-Christians but also many Christians, were keen to preserve ohango. Although many Christians did not accept the missionaries' anti-ohango stance, they did not openly challenge it. They simply ignored it.

The quarrel over the wedding ox

The wedding ox (*oyonda* or *ongombe yohango*) was a custom which, like ohango, caused conflicts between missionaries and Christians, between Christians and non-Christians and among the Ovambo Christians. The main difference relative to

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221 E. Lehto to M. Tarkkanen 24 Oct. 1916, Eac20, AFMS, NAF.

222 See V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 13 Dec. 1926 & 15 June 1927, Eac26-27; Minutes of the church administration 25 Oct. 1927 § 1 and 15 Dec. 1927 §1, Hha9. All in AFMS, NAF; Pöytäkirjoja tehty tarkastustilaisuuksissa Ambomaalla 1925 (Mission director Tarkkanen's meeting with Olukonda parish elders and teachers 18 July 1925) p. 30, Dga, AELCIN; Rev. G. Dymond, Rev. W. Turvey and Rev. A. Björklund to Ass. NCO 24 July 1947, 5/7/1, NAO, NAN; NCO Annual Report 1946, p. 14, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Pater H. Bücking to NCO 20 Feb. 1949, 32/7, NAO, NAN.

223 Hayes, 1992, p. 306 ; McKittrick, 1995, p. 174–175, 210–211; Kreike, 1996, p. 272–274; McKittrick, 1998, p. 259; Juntunen, 2002, p. 40; McKittrick, 2002, p. 39–41, 217–218.

224 E.g. Tönjes, 1911, p. 136; Hopeasalmi, 1946, p. 75; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 46; Juntunen, 2002, p.17–19.

the conflicts caused by ohango was that in the case of oyonda some Christians not only opposed the missionaries in their deeds but also openly questioned the missionaries' views of the custom. Open opposition was possible because the missionaries did not have a unified stance on the wedding ox; for some it was an acceptable national custom, while most regarded it as an unacceptable heathen one. It was the missionaries' disagreement on the issue that made them give also the Ovambo Christians a say in it.

Oyonda was not a uniform custom, as there were both local and temporal differences. In fact, oyonda in the form that became an object of conflict during the first half of the twentieth century may have been of rather recent origin.[225] The origins of the wedding ox custom and possible changes in it are not the theme here, however, and therefore it is sufficient just to take up the aspects which are relevant to the conflict issue. An Ovambo groom was expected to give his bride's parents an ox, preferably an imposing one, before the wedding. The beast was slaughtered at the wedding and eaten after the carcass had been used to perform certain rituals.

At the beginning of the twentieth century there were no generally prevailing rules concerning the Lutheran Church's attitude to the wedding ox. Some local decisions, or decisions in principle apparently had been made against the custom in 1903 and 1904, but in practice it depended on the local missionary as to whether Christians in his congregation were allowed to give wedding oxen; some forbade it while others allowed it.[226] The Ovambo Christians were said to have been against any attempts to forbid oyonda,[227] and according to the missionary Liljeblad, most missionaries allowed it. Liljeblad did not, and he excommunicated anybody who gave or demanded an ox. He also insisted that the FMS should declare clearly that the wedding ox practice was forbidden among Christians. That was not done, but instead the missionaries' meeting in 1918 confirmed the existing practice that individual missionaries had the right to decide whether or not they allowed wedding oxen to be given by their parishioners.[228]

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225 McKittrick has suggested that bridewealth (as she puts it) may have been rather considerable in eastern communities up to the 1860s. After that it would have existed only in nominal form, consisting of only an ox and a few hoes. In the western communities, according to her, bridewealth did not exist at all. On the other hand, Hans Schinz, who travelled in Ovamboland in the mid-1880s, claimed that in Ondonga and the western communities "it appears that the bride is handed over to the groom without any claims" [my translation], while in Uukwanyama the groom was expected to give his parents-in-law a few hoes. Schinz's observation may well be correct, because Mateus Shehuma, who was one of Liljeblad's Kwanyama informants in the 1930s, argued that the Kwanyama oyonda originally consisted of a few hoes. According to Shehuma, the ox first emerged as oyonda in Uukwanyama in the 1880s. (See ELC no. 757, p. 1177; Schinz, 1891, p. 310–311; McKittrick, 1995, p. 56; McKittrick, 2002, p. 81.)

226 E. Liljeblad to J. Mustakallio 31 Jan. 1907, Eac12, AFMS, NAF; Varis, 1988, p. 134.

227 E. Liljeblad to J. Mustakallio 31 Jan. 1907, Eac12; Saari, Heikki, Mitä parannuksia olisi toivottava lähetystyöhön nähden, mmm 14 Sept. – 6 Oct. 1925, §4, Appendix 3, Hha9. Both in AFMS, NAF.

228 E. Liljeblad to J. Mustakallio 31 Jan. 1907, Eac12; E. Björklund to M. Tarkkanen 15 Oct. 1916, Eac20; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 2 April 1917 and 1 Oct. 1919, Eac20 and 21; Mmm 16 Jan. 1918, addition made by the scrutinizers of the minutes, Hha7. All in AFMS, NAF.

The first rules for the whole Ovambo Church concerning the wedding ox were laid down at the synodal meeting in 1921. The decision was preceded by much disagreement, however, and neither the missionaries nor the Ovambo lay representatives had a united stance on the question. According to Alho, most missionaries would have wanted to forbid the wedding ox, but some older ones, especially Martti Rautanen, were against the idea. On the Ovambo side the majority of representatives were apparently in favour of allowing the wedding ox at Christian marriages. One of these was King Martin of Ondonga who first criticised the missionaries who wanted to forbid oyonda, and then marched out of the meeting. As a consequence of the disagreements, the decision was bound to be a compromise; It was forbidden for Christian parents-in-law to demand a wedding ox as a precondition for marriage, but a Christian groom was allowed to give an ox providing that the animal was not slaughtered.[229] The board of directors of the FMS advised the missionaries to adopt a moderate stance regarding the wedding ox, but the majority of missionaries still wanted a total prohibition of the custom.[230]

The 1921 decision was not a firm one in either direction and was said to have caused considerable confusion,[231] and therefore the matter was taken up again in 1925 during an inspection visit to Ovamboland by the mission director Matti Tarkkanen. The missionaries discussed the matter in their meeting in September, and although strong views were expressed against the wedding ox, there were also quite many of the missionaries in favour of allowing it. One of them was Tarkkanen himself, who had interviewed teachers and parish elders and had come to the conclusion that the custom did not include any heathen rites.[232] The final decision was left to the synodal meeting, with a recommendation from the missionaries that the giving and slaughtering of a wedding ox (without magic rites) should be permitted, but that the demanding of one by a bride's parents should be forbidden. Even at this stage Alho demanded that individual missionaries should have a right to forbid the wedding ox in their congregations even if the synodal meeting allowed it.[233] The synod did indeed allow it.[234]

That was not the end of the story, though. The question was taken up again in the synodal meeting in 1929, and turned into a serious disagreement which was said to have brought the Lutheran Church to the verge of disintegration. The Ndonga representatives were in favour of allowing the wedding ox while the representatives from the other communities were against it. Finally the Ndonga gave in and this meeting forbade Christians to give or to demand a wedding ox.[235] Two years later the missionaries' meeting gave a supplementary ruling that any Chris-

229 See V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 11 Feb. 1921 and 31 March 1921, Eac22, AFMS, NAF.
230 Mmm 11 Jan. 1922 §1, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.
231 Mmm 10 Oct. 1923 §5, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.
232 Mmm 14 Sept. – 6 Oct. 1925 §7 and 9, Hha9, AFMS, NAF.
233 Mmm 14 Sept. – 6 Oct. 1925 §19, Hha9, AFMS, NAF.
234 See V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 31 July 1926, Eac26 and Minutes of the synodal meeting 2–3 May 1929 §4, Hha10, AFMS, NAF.
235 V. Alho to Ovamboland church administration 24 April 1935, Eac36; A. Glad to U. Paunu 29 March 1936, Eac37; Minutes of the synodal meeting 2–3 May 1929 §4, Hha10. All in AFMS, NAF.

tian who gave or demanded an ox would be excommunicated.[236] Quite a few people were obviously not happy with the 1929 decision. With some benefit of hindsight, the missionary Walde Kivinen stated that the decision turned out to be a mistake because it made oyonda "a nationalistic issue"[237], i.e. forbidding the wedding ox made people more willing to defend it and thus increased antagonism in relations between the missionaries and the Christians. One Christian who clearly questioned the prohibition was again King Martin, so that when Johannes yaNamene, the heir to the throne, married in 1931, the king ordered him to give oyonda to his parents-in-law.[238] The next year the Uukwanyama headmen (some of them Christian) took action against the ban by unanimously declaring that they would not allow missionaries to interfere with indigenous marriage customs.[239] Finally, the mission director, Tarkkanen, and the board of directors of the FMS also showed their disapproval. The board eventually used its right of veto over synodal decisions and annulled the ban on wedding ox.[240]

The decision by the board of directors did not stop some missionaries from acting against the wedding ox, however. In Uukwanyama August Hänninen, the missionary at Engela, still refused to marry couples whose groom had given a wedding ox,[241] and his example was apparently followed by the Kwanyama Lutheran pastors. The Lutherans' opposition led L. D. Thomson, the colonial officer in charge of Uukwanyama, to accuse the missionaries of trying to weaken "tribal discipline". According to Thomson, their opposition to the wedding ox was an attempt to gain secular power by trying to remove young people from the sphere of family and community influence.[242] As the result of the prevailing situation, the Uukwanyama council of headmen summoned the Kwanyama Lutheran pastors, together with leading teachers, to meetings to discuss the wedding ox and demanded that the Lutherans, too[243], should recognise oyonda. At first the Lutheran representatives were opposed to the demand, and they acceded only after the headmen had threatened that no fields would be allocated to men who had not given a wedding ox.[244] The presiding missionary, Alho, and Native Commissioner Hahn also negotiated over this matter. The final outcome of these two rounds of negotiations is somewhat blurred, but it may be that the Lutheran side managed to gain

236 Mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931 §17, Hha11, AFMS, NAF.
237 W. Kivinen to K.A. Paasio 5 Nov. 1934, Eac35, AFMS, NAF.
238 NCO Annual Report 1931, p. 4, 11/1, NAO, NAN.
239 NCO Monthly Report Sept.– Oct. 1932, p. 2, 11/1, NAO, NAN; V. Alho's Annual Report 1932 (general report), mmm 13–14 Jan. 1933, Appendix 1, Hha12, AFMS, NAF.
240 V. Alho to Ovamboland church administration 24 April 1935, Eac36; Mmm 15–16 July 1931 §18, Hha11. Both in AFMS, NAF.
241 Copy A. Hänninen to Major Hahn 4 April 1938, Eac38, AFMS, NAF; Ass. NCO (Oshikango) to NCO 22 Feb. 1938, 2/12, NAO, NAN.
242 Ass. NCO (Oshikango) to NCO 22 Feb. 1938, 2/12, NAO; NAN; Ass. NCO to NCO 11 Feb. 1937, quoted in Kreike, 1996, p. 277.
243 The Anglican mission working in Uukwanyama did not oppose the wedding ox. (See e.g. Ass. NCO [Oshikango] to NCO 22 Feb. 1938, 2/12, NAO, NAN; V. Alho to U. Paunu 26 March 1938, Eac38, AFMS, NAF.)
244 See Ass. NCO (Oshikango) to NCO 22 Feb. 1938 and 27 April 1938, 2/12, NAO, NAN; W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 24–28 April 1938, Eac38, AFMS, NAF.

the concession that nobody had the right to demand a wedding ox as a precondition for marriage.[245] The main outcome is clear, however: the missionaries or Lutheran pastors could no longer refuse to marry couples even if the groom had given a wedding ox. Alho saw this as a considerable blow to the missionaries' freedom of action, but regarded submission as unavoidable if the missionaries were to avoid a serious conflict with the administration.[246]

After the Second World War the wedding ox no longer caused conflicts on a scale that would have involved the missionaries, although wedding ox was in such widespread use among Christians in the 1950s that the mission director, Vapaavuori, would have wanted the FMS to take actions against the custom.[247] That did not happen, and the giving or receiving of a wedding ox was now definitely allowed for Christians as well. Thus the 1958 regulations of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church, for example, do not mention anything about the wedding ox but simply state that no heathen or unchristian customs should be followed at the wedding celebration.[248] The custom has survived up to the present, even among the Christians, and Tuupainen's admittedly sketchy evidence suggests that an ox was part of all Christian weddings in Ondonga in the mid-1960s. Also, according to Becker and Hinz, oyonda was still observed in the overwhelming majority of marriages in the mid-1990s.[249]

The question of the wedding ox caused conflicts between the missionaries and the Ovambo Christians because the majority of the missionaries in the field were against the custom while the majority of Ovambo Christians were apparently in favour of it. As Alho put it: "If you ask the Christians' opinion, without any preceding propaganda from the missionaries, it is obvious that the wedding ox will remain in use in the congregations."[250] Even many of the leading lay Christians did not share the missionaries' view that oyonda was a "heathen" custom, as shown by Tarkkanen's discussions with the Ndonga parish elders in 1925.[251] Therefore, when the Christians were allowed to express their opinions, many were contrary to those of the majority of the missionaries. But apart from openly opposing the missionaries, some of the Christians again simply ignored the bans. "There is no point in forbidding the wedding ox because the Christians would no doubt break any such

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245 See W. Kivinen to U. Paunu 24–28 April 1938 and V. Alho to U. Paunu 26 March 1938, Eac38, AFMS, NAF.

246 V. Alho to U. Paunu 26 March 1938, Eac38, AFMS, NAF.

247 Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 67–68, Dga, AELCIN.

248 Regulations for the Evangelical-Lutheran Ovambokavango Church 1958 §60, Hhc2, AFMS, NAF.

249 Tuupainen, 1970, p. 62; Becker and Hinz, 1995, p. 60.

250 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 31 March 1921, Eac22. On Christians' willingness to maintain wedding ox see, for example, also A. Järvinen to K.A. Paasio 23 March 1922, Eac23; A. Glad to U. Paunu 29 March 1936, Eac37; Alho, Viktor, Häähärkä amboseurakunnissa, mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 23b, Hha8; Saari, Heikki, Mitä parannuksia olisi toivottava lähetystyöhön nähden, mmm 14 Sept. – 6 Oct. 1925 §4, Appendix 3, Hha9; Mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931 §17, Hha11; Mmm 15–16 July 1931 §18, Hha11; V. Alho, Parish inspection at Onayena 7–10 Nov. 1931, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF.

251 Pöytäkirjoja tehty tarkastustilaisuuksissa Ambomaalla 1925, p. 17, 27, 36, Dga, AELCIN.

ban."[252] Furthermore, when the wedding ox was forbidden, Christians sometimes tried to dupe the clerics by giving one secretly.[253]

The wedding ox could also cause conflicts among the Ovambo. Viktor Alho described the prevailing situation in 1926 in the following way:

> "According to our present rules nobody can be forced to give a wedding ox, but in reality there is no peace between the groom and his bride's kin unless an ox is given. Therefore each and every groom nowadays gives a wedding ox if one is demanded, and [the parents-in-law] always demand it."[254]

If a groom had adopted the missionaries' idea that oyonda was heathen and forbidden, and was therefore not willing to give an ox, he would not infrequently come into conflict with his bride's kin. A few examples from the missionaries' records should be enough to make the point. In 1921 a young newly married man came to Alho for advice. He had not given an ox for his wedding and that had led to serious disagreements with his new wife. Now he was asking if he could be allowed to give the ox in arrears so that he could come to terms with his wife.[255] Some ten years later a Christian couple in Onayena were married without a wedding ox being given. The bride's kin were not happy with this and kept her captive until the groom finally agreed to hand over an ox, although he faced excommunication for doing so.[256] Sometimes not giving a wedding ox could lead to violence, as happened in Uukwambi in 1919. Just before a Ndonga woman was to be married to a Kwambi man, two armed kinsmen of the bride (both Christians) arrived in Uukwambi to demand a wedding ox from the groom. When the groom refused to give one, the men tried to abduct the bride, but were stopped by the residents of the Elim station. For a couple of days the men stayed in the neighbourhood, behaving in a threatening manner, and they left only when the missionary Aarni had asked some of the local people to protect the mission station.[257] Sometimes the bride's kin backed down more easily. In the 1910s one of the few trained Ovambo teachers demanded that his niece's groom provide an ox for the couple's wedding. Both the bride and the groom were opposed to oyonda, and finally the uncle had to give in.[258] Without a wedding ox there was a danger that the marriage could end up in desertion, however, even years after the wedding, because the wife's relatives might pressure her to leave her husband on the grounds that a marriage without oyonda was not valid.[259]

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252 Missionary A. Perheentupa in Mmm 14 Sept – 6 Oct. 1925 §7, Hha9 (transl. KM). On ignoring bans on the wedding ox, see also V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 31 July 1926, Eac26; Mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931 §17, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF

253 Ass. NCO (Oshikango) to NCO 22 Feb. 1938, 2/12, NAO, NAN; A. Perheentupa's Annual Report 1923 (Onayena), mmm 8 Jan. 1924, Appendix 13, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.

254 V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 31 July 1926, Eac26, AFMS, NAF. (transl. KM)

255 Alho, Viktor, Päähärkä amboseurakunnissa, mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 23b, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.

256 Mmm 15–16 July 1931 §18, Hha11, AFMS, NAF.

257 E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 1 Oct. 1919, Eac21, AFMS, NAF.

258 E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 2 April 1917, Eac20, AFMS, NAF.

259 See Alho, Viktor, Päähärkä amboseurakunnissa, mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 23b, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.

A wedding feast. Note the lumpy object in front of the men, which appears to be the carcass of a recently slaughtered wedding ox, certain parts of which were to be given to certain relatives of the bride in accordance with strict traditional rules. (Photo by courtesy of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission)

Now we are again faced with the question of why the wedding ox also became a cause of conflict, i.e. why many Ovambo Christians wanted to preserve the custom and why the majority of the missionaries were opposed to it. Let us begin with the Ovambo side.

The slaughtering of a wedding ox was a ritual which originally appears to have included some magical practices and beliefs. The bride had to mark her face with the animal's blood and also drink it in order to guarantee her fertility. It was also important that certain parts of the carcass were given to certain relatives; otherwise they might have cast spells on the couple and cause childlessness or other misfortunes.[260] Such beliefs probably were not the reason why the Christians wanted to preserve the wedding ox, however, because magic beliefs related to it appear to have been fading well before the Second World War, although there were some missionaries who claimed that the Christians also followed the magic practices

260 See E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 21 March 1931, Eac30; A. Glad to K.A. Paasio 14 Sept. 1935, Eac36; Alho, Viktor, Häähärkä amboseurakunnissa, mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 23b, Hha8. All in AFMS, NAF. Pöytäkirjoja tehty tarkastustilaisuuksissa Ambomaalla 1925 (Miss. Dir. Tarkkanen's inspection of Onayena parish 9 July 1925), p. 27, Dga, AELCIN.

when oxen were slaughtered.[261] On the other hand, quite a few missionaries, as well as leading lay Christians, were of the opinion that the slaughtering was done among the Christians without any heathen practices, i.e. magic had no part in it.[262] The absence of magic was also pointed out by Tuupainen in the 1960s, having gained the impression, based on field information, that the magic beliefs related to the wedding ox had lost much of their strength even among the traditionalists.[263] Furthermore, it should be noted that when the missionaries wrote about conflicts caused by not giving a wedding ox, it usually was the groom (sometimes with the bride as well) who wanted the marriage to take place without it. If it was believed that this might cause the couple misfortune, then the groom (or bride) would surely have been the last person to have wanted to abandon oyonda, because they would have been most seriously affected by the misfortune.

The magic element of oyonda is thus not a satisfactory explanation for its survival in a Christian context. A more probable reason is its complex social importance. According to Tuupainen's findings, the wedding ox had following social functions: 1) it was the real ratification of marriage, so that no marriage without oyonda could be considered valid; 2) it gave the father limited social rights with regard to his children; 3) it created and supported friendly relations between the kin of the spouses; 4) it was a token of the groom's appreciation for his bride, and therefore it added to the wife's social prestige and value; and 5) it was the groom's thanks to his bride's mother for bringing up her daughter.[264] Judging from the missionaries' records, the Christians considered at least two of the above aspects to be important: The wedding ox was the actual ratification of marriage,[265] and giving an ox was a groom's way of thanking his mother-in-law for bringing up the bride.[266] Oyonda was apparently also important for the bride's prestige, because some brides were said to have been willing to abandon their grooms if suitors with more handsome oxen turned up.[267]

The important social functions of oyonda meant that a groom who was not willing to give his bride's kin a wedding ox was bound to find himself in a difficult situation. Not only did he make his own marriage invalid in the eyes of other

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261 E. Liljeblad to J. Mustakallio 31 Jan. 1907, Eac12; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 2 April 1917, Eac20; A. Glad to K.A. Paasio 14 Sept. 1935, Eac36; Mmm 11 Jan. 1922 §1, Hha8. All in AFMS, NAF. Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani.... 1954, p. 67, Dga, AELCIN.

262 E. Liljeblad to J. Mustakallio 31 Jan. 1907, Eac12 ; Mmm 14 Sept – 6 Oct 1925 §7 and 9, Hha9. Both in AFMS, NAF. Pöytäkirjoja tehty tarkastustilaisuuksissa Ambomaalla 1925, p. 17, 27, 36, Dga, AELCIN.

263 Tuupainen, 1970, p. 63. See also Becker and Hinz, 1995, p. 60.

264 Tuupainen, 1970, p. 61–65.

265 See E. Liljeblad to J. Mustakallio 31 Jan. 1907, Eac12; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 31 July 1926, Eac26; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 21 March 1931, Eac30; Mmm 15–16 July 1931 §18, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF. Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani.... 1954, p. 67, Dga, AELCIN. The wedding ox as the actual ratification of a Christian marriage has also been mentioned by "a leading Christian Kwanyama headman" (See Hahn, C.H.L, Ovambo Marriages [typescript], s.d. translated quotation on p. 19–20, 2/38, A450, NAN)

266 Pöytäkirjoja tehty tarkastustilaisuuksissa Ambomaalla 1925 (Tarkkanen's inspection of Onayena parish 9 July 1925), p. 27, Dga, AELCIN. Wäänänen, Nestori, The customs of Ovambos (typescript), 30 Dec. 1926, p. 2, 2/35, A450, NAN.

267 ELC No. 1164e, p. 1641.

people, but he also snubbed his mother-in-law, her relatives and his own bride. It is small wonder that there was no peace between him and the bride's kin. There were therefore strong social pressures to give a wedding ox even when the groom, for one reason or another, was not really willing to do so. This aspect is obvious in the conflict stories which the missionaries report. Thus, the wedding ox appears, at least in some cases, to have become an object of generational conflict, the younger generation, leaning towards the missionaries, being more willing to give up the tradition of oyonda than the older one. For the older generation it was an important means of maintaining the established social order, and of emphasizing their own social position above the younger generation. After all, by giving them a wedding ox, the young man was not only humbly thanking his parents-in-law, but also seeking their approval (ratification) for the marriage. As it was the older generation that, in general, was dominant in social relations, it was quite predictable that they would usually have their way in conflicts over oyonda. It can also be assumed that the issue of generational dominance worked through the generations. A young man who had been unwilling to give a wedding ox would gain a higher social status as he grew older, and when his daughter or niece was to be married he would probably demand an ox from the groom. At that stage, unlike the situation when he was young, he would regard it as important for the maintenance of the social system in which he now had an elevated status. The important social functions of oyonda, together with older generation's aim to sustain their dominance in Ovambo society, are important reasons why the wedding ox also survived in a Christian context against the wishes of many of the missionaries, although they will scarcely have been the only ones.

The missionaries' repertoire of arguments against the wedding ox was extensive, but often obscure or illogical. Some categories of reasonably understandable arguments can be discussed, however. One argument that was quite often used was that the wedding ox was a brideprice, and that by giving an ox the bridegroom was buying himself a wife.[268] Some even went as far as to claim that giving a wedding ox was equal to buying a slave.[269] The term the missionaries sometimes used of the wedding ox was *lobolo*, which normally refers to brideprice practices among the patrilineal Bantu. Semantically their use of the word is understandable, because *lobolo* is a rather unspecified, general term (as also are brideprice and bridewealth) which can refer to numerous practices in which an exchange of goods or money takes place in connection with entering upon matrimony.[270] The missionaries' claim that the wedding ox was a brideprice is clearly untrue, however, as shown by its functions cited above. This conclusion has also been reached by many scholars,

268 E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 2 April 1917 and 1 Oct. 1919, Eac20–21; Alho, Viktor, Häähärkä amboseurakunnissa, mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 23b, Hha8; Mmm 11 Jan. 1922 §1, Hha8. All in AFMS, NAF. Presiding missionary W. Kivinen to the Secretary for SWA 8 March 1937, A489/2, SWAA, NAN. Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 67–68, Dga, AELCIN.

269 Alho, Viktor, Häähärkä amboseurakunnissa, mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 23b, Hha8, AFMS, NAF; Ass. NCO (Oshikango) to NCO 22 Feb 1938, 2/12, NAO, NAN.

270 See e.g. Tuupainen, 1970, Appendix 13, p. 153–158; Gluckman, 1987, p. 200.

as well as some missionaries.[271] Oyonda was not a brideprice, as it did not give the husband any special rights over his wife, it was not a payment for the wife's labour, nor did it transfer the wife to the husband's kin. It simply ratified the marriage.

The claim that the wedding ox was a brideprice was basically a moral argument, as also was the idea that it was an expression of greed. Here the missionaries were referring to the eagerness of the kinsmen of brides to demand oxen. They were particularly unhappy with future parents-in-law who would not accept the first animal which a groom offered but demanded a more handsome one.[272] In such case it was not just the unchristian greed which was worrying, but also the danger to sexual morals. If a groom's ox was not accepted, he had to earn more for a new one and the wedding had to be postponed. This increased the possibility of the marriage being consummated before it was blessed, i.e. the danger of illicit intercourse.[273]

The corollary of the greed argument was the economic argument, that earning enough to buy a wedding ox was too heavy a burden for a young man, particularly when the animal was slaughtered for the wedding feast. The missionaries felt that if it had to be given, it should be given to the bride and not slaughtered. In this way it would form the beginning of the herd of the wife and her children.[274] But that was not all, for even the missionaries' economic argument had a moral undertone. During his inspection visit to Ovamboland in 1954, the mission director, Tuure Vapaavuori, made a note of the high price of oyonda. He also noted that in Hereroland bridewealth had recently become so high that many men were forced to enter into "collective marriages", i.e. several men shared a common "wife". Vapaavuori was worried that a similar custom might soon emerge in Ovamboland, too.[275]

The argument that obtaining a wedding ox was a heavy economic burden on young Ovambo men may have some validity. There is some sketchy evidence to show how long a man had to work to earn enough to buy an ox for his wedding. Before the colonial period one migrant contract was apparently enough, but this was no longer so in the late 1910s. By the 1930s buying an ox could take up to three or four contracts in the worst cases, while in the 1940s the longer contracts and better wages meant that one contract produced enough earnings to buy one or

271 Sckär Karl, Ovamboland, s.d, p. 53, AVEM; Brincker, 1900, p. 53; Rautanen, 1903, p. 330; Beantwortung des Fragebogens... Ovambogebiet von M. Rautanen, 1913, Frage No. 18 p. 4; Hahn, 1928, p. 32; Teinonen, 1949, p. 34–35; Bruwer, 1961, p. 122; Tuupainen, 1970, p. 59–65; Gluckman, 1987, p. 200; Siiskonen, 1990, p. 87; Becker & Hinz, 1995, p. 61; Kreike, 1996, quote from Anglican missionary W. Gawthorne on p. 265; Juntunen, 2002, p. 46.

272 See V. Alho to U. Paunu 26 March 1938, Eac38; Alho, Viktor, Häähärkä amboseurakunnissa, mmm 12 Jan 1921, Hha8; Mmm 14 Sept – 6 Oct 1925 §9 and 19, Hha9. All in AFMS, NAF. Pöytäkirjoja tehty tarkastustilaisuuksissa Ambomaalla 1925 (Tarkkanen's inspection of Onayena parish), p. 28, Dga, AELCIN; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 67, Dga, AELCIN.

273 Alho, Viktor, Häähärkä amboseurakunnissa, mmm 12 Jan. 1921, Appendix 23b, Hha8, AFMS, NAF.

274 E. Liljeblad to J. Mustakallio 31 Jan. 1907, Eac12; E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 2 April 1917, Eac20; V. Alho to M. Tarkkanen 11 Feb. 1921, Eac22; Mmm 14 Sept – 6 Oct 1925 §19, Hha9. All in AFMS, NAF. Vapaavuori, Tuure Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 67, Dga, AELCIN.

275 Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 68, Dga, AELCIN.

two oxen. Those who had joined the Native Military Corps could buy as many as five head of cattle with their earnings from one year. By the 1950s, however, the earnings from one contract (18 months) were said to have been insufficient to pay for a wedding ox.[276] After that the prices of wedding oxen, and possibly also payments for land allocations, probably increased further, because the period which men had to spend as migrant workers before getting married was becoming longer. According to the findings of Notkola and Siiskonen, the majority of men who had converted to Christianity as migrant labourers married within five years after conversion up to the mid-1950s, whereas after that the interval was more than five years for the majority of such men.[277] Thus it seems that one labour contract of 12 to 18 months was normally not enough for a man to earn the money for a wedding ox in the period before the Second World War, while after the war it took even longer. One is therefore inclined to agree with the missionaries that the obtaining of a wedding ox was indeed an economic burden for young men.

The final category of missionaries' arguments against the wedding ox was a religious one. The claims that the Christians were also following heathen magical rites when slaughtering the ox belong to this category. There were also more general, unspecified claims that oyonda was sinful and heathen, or that it perpetuated heathenism.[278] The last-mentioned claim was once explained by Emil Liljeblad, who maintained that allowing the wedding ox custom would have led Christians to regard "our holy customs of confirmation and matrimony" as insufficient ratifications of coming of age and marriage.[279] In other words, from the missionaries' point of view parallel systems of ratifying changes in a person's social status were not acceptable. This gives us a hint of the missionaries' fundamental reason for opposing oyonda. As pointed out above, the wedding ox had many important social functions, of which one was that it ratified the marriage. The missionaries evidently realized the social importance of oyonda and believed, as in the case of ohango, that the eradication of "heathenism" and the building of a Christian social system, would not have been possible until the wedding ox had vanished, i.e. the ultimate aim of the thorough christianization of Ovambo society could not be achieved all the time there were remnants of alternative indigenous rites which might have tied the Christians to non-Christian beliefs or non-Christian social networks. Therefore the wedding ox had to go, because in the minds of many missionaries it apparently formed a "second pillar of heathenism", as it were.

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276 McKittrick, 1995, p. 138; Kreike, 1996, p. 220; McKittrick, 1998, p. 251; Notkola & Siiskonen, 2000, p. 82; McKittrick, 2002, p. 173.

277 Notkola & Siiskonen, 2000, p. 133.

278 See e.g. A. Glad to K.A. Paasio 14 Sept 1935, Eac36; A. Glad to U. Paunu 29 March 1936, Eac37; Mmm 11 Jan. 1922 §1, Hha8; Mmm 14 Sept – 6 Oct 1925 §6, 7 and 9, Hha9; Amboseurakuntain yhteisten kirkkopäivien pöytäkirja [minutes of the synodal meeting] 2–3 May 1929, Hha10; Mmm 13–15 Jan. 1931 §17, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF. Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 68, Dga, AELCIN.

279 E. Liljeblad to M. Tarkkanen 31 Jan. 1907, Eac12, AFMS, NAF.

To drink or not to drink

The most important alcoholic beverage of the Ovambo had originally been their *omalovu* beer, which was usually made of sorghum. It had a high nutritional value but a low alcohol content, and therefore became intoxicating only when consumed in considerable quantities.[280] More intoxicating was *omagongo*, which was made by fermenting marula fruit juice. This was usually consumed in large quantities for a month or so in February and March, when the marula fruits ripened, and few people could said to have been totally sober during the *omagongo* drinking season.[281] A third indigenous alcoholic beverage was palm wine, which was made from the sap tapped from the stem. Making wine this way killed the tree, and therefore both the indigenous and the colonial authorities made some attempts to forbid it.[282] Palm wine was still being made in various places at least during the famine around 1930, however, and again in Ondonga in the 1940s and 1950s.[283]

Omalovu and *omagongo* were not just intoxicants but also had a social role, particularly the beer, which was served on all even remotely important social occasions. When a homestead was moved, for example, beer was needed, as the master of the house was expected to provide plenty of beer for his neighbours who came to help with the moving. Furthermore, beer was needed in the rites which were performed to ensure good luck and prosperity in the new homestead.[284] The drinking of *omagongo* was also partly a social event, because the season for this marked the turn of the year. The New Year was celebrated with big feasts which were organized by the kings or other dignitaries and included (apart from the drinking of *omagongo*) dances, rites and exclamations of joy.[285]

Distilled alcohol came to Ovamboland during the latter half of the nineteenth century with the emergence of long-distance trade, when Portuguese traders from Southern Angola began selling spirits distilled from sugar cane to the upper stratum of the Ovambo society in exchange for slaves. When SWA was mandated to South Africa in 1920 the new colonial authorities forbade imports of alcohol into Ovamboland, as they were obliged to do under the mandate, and the commercial production of indigenous alcoholic beverages was also declared illegal. These measures did not dry Ovamboland out, however, because the administration was un-

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280 Tönjes, 1911, p. 73–74; Lebzelter, 1934, p. 216–217; Loeb, 1962, p. 176–177.

281 ELC no. 1042, p. 1464; Tönjes, 1911, p. 74–75; Koivu, 1925, 35–38.

282 E.g. Copy NCO to Chief Kambonde of Ondonga 4 Dec. 1953, 32/2, NAO, NAN; Koivu, 1925, p. 38. (According to Koivu, King Iipumbu had decreed that the making of palm wine was allowed only during famines. Thus the wine was apparently not only an intoxicant but also a source of nourishment)

283 S. Rainio to M. Tarkkanen 31 Aug. 1929, Eac29; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista länsiheimoissa ja Uukwanyamassa 1930 (Elim parish inspection 2–3 Aug. 1930), Eac30; O. Aho's Annual Report 1929 (Uukwambi), mmm 15 Jan. 1930, Appendix 44, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF; Copy NCO to Chief Native Commissioner 8 Nov. 1948 and copy NCO to Chief Kambonde 4 Dec. 1953, 32/3, NAO, NAN.

284 E.g. ELC no. 1, p. 1; ELC no. 2, p. 2–4; ELC no. 31, p. 79; ELC no. 142, p. 344–346; ELC no. 155, p. 402; ELC no. 213, p. 478, 481–482; ELC no. 339, p. 765.

285 See ELC no. 78, p. 198–199; ELC no. 146, p. 354; ELC no. 974, p. 1410; ELC no. 976, p. 1412; ELC no. 1180, p. 1667–1668.

able to stop the smuggling of spirits from Angola.[286] Furthermore, people also learned the art of home distilling in due course. Distilling was not unknown in Uukwanyama in the late 1920s, and in 1947 the colonial authorities destroyed no less than 352 stills in four months in that region alone.[287]

In the long run the restrictive colonial alcohol policy turned out to work unsatisfactorily, because homemade stills were sold illegally[288] . In 1969 a new approach was adopted: imports of alcohol and controlled sales of alcohol to the African population by licensed African entrepreneurs was now legalized. As a consequence of the policy change, and continued home distilling, hundreds of small bars (cuca-shops) were established and the consumption of alcohol began increasing rapidly.[289]

The Finnish missionaries had been against the drinking of alcohol from the beginning of their work, and drinking was already discussed at the first synodal meeting in 1888.[290] It is clear that their aim was to create temperate Christians, but until the 1940s they had no unified stance on how temperate the Christians should be. Some demanded teetotalism, while others would have allowed the drinking of *omalovu* providing that the aim was not to get drunk. The latter approach seems to have been dominant up to the 1930s. The drinking of *omagongo* (or distilled liquor) or being intoxicated was something which all the missionaries forbade,[291] and leading members of the congregations (parish elders and teachers) were expected to be firmly temperate.[292] The non-Christians' drinking habits naturally lay beyond the missionaries' control (or interest), although Alho twice asked Hahn in the late 1920s to take action against Ovambos' use of alcohol.[293]

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286 Siiskonen, 1990, p. 152–154; Siiskonen, 1994, p. 78–79.

287 See Presiding missionary V. Alho to NCO 12 Nov. 1928 and copy NCO to the presiding missionary of the Finnish Mission 25 Nov. 1928, 6/1/1, NAO, NAN; NCO Monthly Report Dec. 1928, 11/1, NAO, NAN; Lebzelter, 1934, p. 217; Siiskonen, 1994, p. 79. ** Home distilling may already have been quite common in Uukwanyama in the 1920s, because fifteen Lutheran Kwanyama men and three women were excommunicated in 1927 alone for having distilled alcohol. (Minutes of the field administration board or church administration board 9 Feb.1927 §8, 20 April 1927 § 17, 15 July 1927 § 1 and 22 Nov. 1927 §1, Hha9, AFMS, NAF.)

288 E. Hynönen's Annual Report (Uukwanyama), mmm 9–12 Jan. 1957, Appendix 10, Hha28, AFMS, NAF.

289 Siiskonen, 1994, p. 80–81.

290 Peltola, 1958, p. 112.

291 See e.g. E. Lehto (?) to M. Tarkkanen 3 June 1919, Eac21; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista länsiheimoissa ja Uukwanyamassa 1930, (Uukwambi parish inspection 2–3 Aug. 1930), Eac30; V. Alho to K.A. Paasio 25 Jan. 1935, Eac36; Minutes of the fifth synod 12-14 May 1931 §6, Hha11; Mmm 9-10 Jan. 1935 §16, Hha13; Minutes of the synodal meeting 24–25 July 1937 §9, Hha15. All in AFMS, NAF. Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkastani... 1954, p. 61, 63, Dga, AELCIN; Some remarks to the report 1937 of the Government of SWA in regard to the mission work in Ovamboland by the Central Committee Finnish Mission Ovamboland, April 1939, p. 8, Eaj, AELCIN; Peltola, 1958, p. 112; Varis, 1988, p. 112–113.

292 E.g. A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 7 June 1920 and R. Rautanen to M. Tarkkanen 30 March 1926, Eac22 and 26, AFMS, NAF.

293 Presiding missionary V. Alho to NCO 12 Nov. 1928, 6/1/1, NAO, NAN. Copy presiding missionary to NCO 12 April 1929, Eaj, AELCIN.

The arguments which the missionaries used against drinking are not at all surprising. Firstly there was the unspecified claim that intoxication was a sin. According to Varis, the missionaries were unhappy with intoxication particularly because it was a manifestation of a desire for extravagance.[294] Then there was the indirect moral argument that drinking is bound to lead first and foremost to fornication and also to rows, violence and even murder. Thirdly, we find the economic argument, that making alcohol was a waste of scarce natural resources (grain and palms), while drinking led to laziness, which reduced productivity.[295] To avoid such consequences, the Christians naturally had to be punished if they became intoxicated. The normal punishment before World War II seems to have been exclusion from Communion, but "drunkards" could even be excommunicated.[296]

Although the punishments for drinking were quite heavy, they did not prevent Christians from drinking. The few Ovambo who had already been baptized in the 1880s refused to promise that they would abstain from drinking,[297] and this set the tone for the Christians' attitude towards temperance for the decades to follow, so that the missionaries reported quite often that their parishioners did indeed consume alcohol. They seldom made much fuss about it, however, even though occasional drinking appears to have been quite common among the Christians. In Ondangwa, for example, only one parish elder could be elected in 1920 because this parish of some 700 members had only one man who did not drink *omagongo*,[298] and a decade later most of the Christians in Uukwambi were making and drinking palm wine during the famine and since drinkers were excluded from Communion, no Communion was administered for two years because very few parishioners would have been eligible for it.[299] As these examples show, the Christians did not regard drinking as a sin, and therefore they ignored the missionaries' drinking bans. They ignored them, but they did not openly challenge the missionaries' stance, except once, when a group of Christians in Uukwaluudhi "insolently" informed Aarni during a parish meeting in 1926 that they had no intention of obeying the missionaries' drinking regulations.[300] Something like that could hardly have taken place in Ombalantu, which was the most temperate of all the Ovambo

294 Varis, 1988, p. 113.

295 E.g. Copy presiding missionary to NCO 12 April 1929; Some remarks to the report 1937 of the Government of SWA in regard to the mission work in Ovamboland by the Central Committee Finnish Mission Ovamboland, April 1939, p. 8–9. Both in Eaj, AELCIN. Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 59, 62, Dga, AELCIN; Presiding missionary V. Alho to NCO 12 Nov. 1928, 6/1/1, NAO, NAN. Minutes of the fifth synod 12–14 May 1931 §6, Hha11, AFMS, NAF; Minutes of the synodal meeting 24–25 July 1937 §9, Hha15, AFMS, NAF; V. Alho's Annual Report 1943 (general report), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1944, unnumbered appendix, Hha20, AFMS, NAF.

296 See e.g. O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 25 April 1930, Eac30; Mmm 14 Sept – 6 Oct 1925 §16, Hha9; Minutes of the field administration board 9 Feb. 1927 §8 and 20 April 1927 §17, Hha9; Minutes of the church administration board 15 Jan 1929 §1, Hha10; Minutes of the fifth synod 12–14 May 1931 §6, Hha11. All in AFMS, NAF.

297 Peltola, 1958, p. 112; Varis, 1988, p. 112–113.

298 A. Järvinen to M. Tarkkanen 7 June 1920, Eac22, AFMS, NAF.

299 O. Aho to M. Tarkkanen 18 Dec. 1929, 25 April 1930 and 29 Sept. 1930, Eac29–30, AFMS, NAF.

300 Alho, Viktor, Kertomus tarkastusmatkasta länsiheimoihin... 1926 (Tsandi parish inspection), Hha9, AFMS, NAF.

communities. Drinking was not reported to have been a problem there until the early 1940s.[301] In Alho's view the good situation in Ombalantu was a result of the fact that the local Christian community was small and living closely together,[302] in other words the surveillance system worked in a small and isolated Christian community[303] and it was social pressure that kept the Christians sober.

Temperance promotion was of rather low priority in missionary work before the Second World War. People drank, but drinking was not yet considered to be a very serious problem.[304] Things changed in the 1940s and 1950s, however, for drinking was now considered to have become a problem and the work of promoting abstinence gained higher priority on the missionaries' agenda.[305] A few examples should suffice to illustrate the new situation in the early 1940s.The first year that drinking by Christians had become so worrying that it was worth mentioning in the presiding missionary's general report on the Ovambo mission was 1941, when the missionaries also launched a general temperance campaign, while the first local temperance society was founded in Uukwambi in 1942.[306]

The missionaries' intensified campaign against drinking in the 1940s and 1950s may have had several causes. The most obvious would be that drinking was increasing among the population. This is what the missionaries themselves claimed. In Alho's view, the increased consumption of alcohol was partly an expression of the modern decadence which was entering Ovamboland, and partly a consequence of the growth of the Christian community, which had made the parishes so large that proper surveillance of the Christians was no longer possible. The mission director, Tuure Vapaavuori, claimed, however, that drunkenness had become common because the running of parishes had been handed over to Ovambo pastors. Many of them, to his mind, were spineless and therefore unwilling to work for temperance.[307] Whether drinking had really become so much more common as the missionaries claimed cannot be verified, because there is very little non-missionary information on the subject, but it is quite possible that drinking was indeed on the increase at that time. At least the newly appointed native commis-

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301 Alho, Viktor, Kertomus tarkastusmatkasta länsiheimoihin... 1926 (Ombalantu parish inspection), Hha9; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista 20–31.8.1927 (Ombalantu parish inspection), Hha9; K. Himanen's Annual Report 1942 (Ombalantu), mmm 20–21 Jan. 1943, Appendix 37a, Hha20; Alho, Viktor, Kertomus seurakuntatarkastuksista Ambomaalla 1939, (Ombalantu parish inspection), Hhb2. All in AFMS, NAF.

302 Alho, Viktor, Kertomus tarkastusmatkasta länsiheimoihin... 1926 (Ombalantu parish inspection), Hha9, AFMS, NAF.

303 It is relevant to remember that Ombalantu Christian community consisted mostly of Mbandja refugees, not of Mbalantu, up to the 1940s.

304 E.g. Koivu, 1925, p. 37.

305 C.f. *Ambomaa*, 1959, p. 148–149.

306 Copy V. Alho to A. Holmio 13 March 1943, Eac40; General Report on Ovambo Mission 1941, mmm 21–22 Jan. 1942, Appendix 1, Hha19; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1942 (Uukwambi), mmm 20–21 Jan. 1943, Appendix 30, Hha20. All in AFMS, NAF.

307 T. Vapaavuori to the Board of Directors of the FMS 2 July 1946, Eac41; V. Alho's Annual Report 1943 (general report), mmm 12–13 Jan. 1944, unnumbered appendix, Hha20. Both in AFMS, NAF.

sioner, Harold Eedes, seems to have been concerned about drinking, because he ordered all the stills in Uukwanyama to be destroyed in 1947. He also shared Alho's view that alcoholism was spreading in Ovamboland.[308] Furthermore, at least in Ondonga, alcohol abuse was said to have become a problem by the 1960s.[309]

The possible increase in alcohol consumption among the Ovambo in the 1940s (and 1950s) was not the sole reason for missionaries' new emphasis on promoting abstinence, as developments back home presumably also played a role. Drinking was regarded as an increasingly serious problem in Finland after the war, even though alcohol consumption was in fact minimal and not increasing, and as a consequence of such (objectively unfounded) concerns, not only did the traditional temperance movement, which usually advocated total abstinence, gain more strength, but there emerged a new kind of "morale movement" (*Ryhtiliike*) aimed at putting an end to "uncivilized" drunkenness.[310] It would be surprising if the strengthening temperance movement back home had not influenced the missionaries and their leaders in one way or another. But there is still one more reason. By the 1940s the daily running of parishes had been handed over to Ovambo pastors, which meant that the missionaries had less purely religious work to do, as it were, even though their number in Ovamboland increased in the 1940s[311]. They therefore now had spare time for a new hobby.

The most marked change in the missionaries' temperance work in the 1940s was the end of the "light beer policy" (Vapaavuori's term). Beer was now seen as the first step to stronger drinks, and therefore the missionaries began demanding total abstinence on the part of Christians. *Omalovu* was forbidden. The missionaries seem to have been united on this.[312] The means advocated to achieve the goal of total abstinence were mostly quite traditional (in the western sense), although temperance societies do not seem to have taken root in Ovamboland, the Uukwambi one appearing to have been the only one founded, and even that existed only for two years[313]. Instead, public temperance meetings and speeches at religious meetings advocating total abstinence were the main means used. The mission director, Vapaavuori, for example, was constantly reminding Christians of

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308 NCO to Ass. NCO (Oshikango) 12 May 1947; V. Alho (private) to H. Eedes 6 Nov. 1948; Copy NCO to Chief Native Commissioner 8 Nov. 1948. All in 32/3 NAO, NAN.

309 Namuhuja, 2002, p. 47.

310 See Karpio, 1955, p. 7–9; Peltonen, 2002, particularly p. 26–77, 162–178. The number of temperance societies increased by 46 per cent between 1948 and 1953, while membership figures went up by 62 per cent, even though the annual consumption of pure alcohol per person was well under two litres up to the early 1960s. (Karpio, p. 7–9; Peltonen, Appendix 2, p. 191.)

311 There were 46 Finnish mission workers in Ovamboland in 1938 and 58 in 1948. (Peltola, 1958, Appendix p. 259–277)

312 E.g. Copy V. Alho to A. Holmio 13 March 1943, Eac40; T. Vapaavuori to the Board of Directors of the FMS 2 July 1946 and to U. Paunu 9 Aug. 1946, Eac41; mmm 28–29 May 1941 §9, Hha20. All in AFMS, NAF; Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan ja Okavangon lähetysalueilla pidetyistä tarkastuksista 1946, p. 7, 26, 33, 34, Daac, AELCIN; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 61–63, Dga, AELCIN.

313 E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1944 (Uukwambi), mmm 17–18 Jan. 1945, Appendix 28, Hha20, AFMS, NAF.

the dangers of spirits and beer when he toured the Ovambo parishes in 1946.[314] The missionaries were also ready to take quite drastic action against drinking. Thus the school committee decided in November 1954 that from that time on the secondary schools[315] could admit only applicants who had a written certificate from their local pastor that they were known to be teetotalers. As a consequence of this decision, applications to girls' and boys' schools went down slightly in 1955.[316] The new rule did not prevent the students from drinking, however, as was seen at the Ongwediva teacher training school in 1956, when most of the students walked out after three of their number had been expelled for having been intoxicated.[317]

The Ovambo reaction to the missionaries' new temperance fervor was partly the old one, i.e. they ignored their commands. Vapaavuori found this out during his inspection visit in 1954:

> "I asked the parish elders, evangelists, deacons and teachers about their attitude towards the drinking of spirits. To my surprise, I learned that majority of these 'pillars of the parishes' were already slaves to alcohol.... Not many of them regarded drinking as a sin or even anything shameful."[318]

Thus, not even the "crème de la crème" Christians seem to have been in agreement with the missionaries on the question of temperance. This also became evident when the missionaries gathered information about the Christians' drinking habits during the same inspection visit, as according to their findings some 30 per cent of Kwanyama congregational leaders (pastors, parish elders, evangelists, deacons and teachers) did not drink. In Ondonga the situation was very much the same, while about half of all Ovambo teachers were estimated to be non-drinkers.[319] But being ignored was not the only reaction the missionaries faced, for their aim of total abstinence was often openly questioned and opposed by many Ovambo Christians. When Vapaavuori spoke against alcohol in congregational meetings in 1946, he

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314 Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan ja Okavangon lähetysalueilla pidetyistä tarkastuksista 1946, passim., Daac, AELCIN. On temperance meetings see also V. Alho to T. Vapaavuori 1 June 1949, Eac43; E. Hynönen to T. Vapaavuori 4 Dec. 1949, Eac43; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1954 (Uukwanyama), mmm 19–20 Jan. 1955, Appendix 37a, Hha26. All in AFMS, NAF.

315 Boys' and girls' schools, nursing school and teacher training schools.

316 E. Hatakka to T. Vapaavuori 4 April 1955, Eac46; S. Kyllönen's Annual Report 1955 (schools), mmm 10–12 Jan 1956, Appendix 3, Hha27. Both in AFMS, NAF; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 62, Dga, AELCIN.

317 U. Poikolainen to O. Vuorela 30 Sept. 1956, Eac47 & U. Poikolainen's Annual Report 1956 (Ongwediva teacher training school), mmm 9–12 Jan. 1957, Appendix 14, Hha28, AFMS, NAF.

318 Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 61, Dga, AELCIN. (transl. KM) The situation had apparently been quite similar during Vapaavuori's earlier inspection visit in 1946, because he claimed that every single pastor and teacher was a "friend of beer" (T. Vapaavuori to U. Paunu 9 Aug. 1946, Eac41, AFMS, NAF.)

319 Eriksson, Birger, Muistiinpanoja lähetysjohtajan seurakuntatarkastuksista 1954, Ondonga (Notes concerning the Ondonga parish inspection by the mission director), Hha25; Hynönen, Erkki, Lähetysjohtaja Vapaavuoren v. 1954 toimittaman seurakuntien tarkastuksen aikana tehtyjä havaintoja Uukwanyaman seurakuntien raittiustilanteesta (Notes concerning the temperance situation in Uukwanyama parishes), 29 Nov. 1954, Hha25; S. Kyllönen's Annual Report 1955 (schools), mmm 10–12 Jan 1956, Appendix 3, Hha27. All in AFMS, NAF.

sometimes faced teachers, even pastors, who opposed his view that drinking beer was a sin, and during his 1954 inspection visit the Christians' resistance to total abstinence was said to have been "fierce".[320] Later in the 1950s some Kwanyama went even further and began disturbing temperance meetings, and the colonial authorities were also approached and asked to stop the missionaries' temperance campaign.[321] Some Christians in Uukwanyama and the western parishes also voted with their feet, and an unspecified number of Lutherans switched to Anglicanism or Catholicism because these denominations had a more liberal approach on the subject of drink.[322]

The Christians' open opposition to the missionaries' temperance drive is a clear manifestation of the new critical attitude which the Ovambo adopted towards the missionaries after World War II, but in the case of the drinking controversy the Ovambo opposition was probably manifested more openly than it would have been if the missionaries had not adopted a totally uncompromising approach. This was pointed out in a way by Efraim Angula, who mentioned the struggle over temperance as an example of a missionary activity which the local people did not appreciate. They felt that missionaries' attempt to control drinking, a non-religious matter, represented unacceptable interference in their personal freedom.[323]

Although the missionaries' temperance movement faced considerable opposition, it was not totally unsuccessful. Some small or temporary victories were gained. During the campaign in the 1950s, for example, the majority of pastors, teachers and girls' school students appear to have adopted the idea that only total abstinence was suitable for Christians.[324] Temperance was given its major temporary boost, however, by the short revival movement in1952. Total abstinence and the sinfulness of beer were constantly preached in the *Epapudhuko* meetings, particularly by youngsters, and this led many revivalists to resolve to give up drinking even beer, not to mention stronger drinks.[325] Such decisions could be sudden ones. As one Kwanyama man told the missionary Kekki:

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320 Tarkastuspöytäkirjat Ambomaan... tarkastuksista 1946, p. 26, 28, 29, 33, 34, 39, Daac; Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 61, 63 Dga. Both in AELCIN. On open resistance to the missionaries' views concerning drinking, see also A. Rancken to T. Vapaavuori 13 Nov. 1947, Eac42; Minutes of the 10th synod 31 Aug – 2 Sept 1950 §11, Hha22; J. Marttunen's Annual Report 1955 (Uukwanyama), mmm 10–12 Jan 1956, Appendix 10, Hha27; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1956 (Uukwanyama), mmm 9–12 Jan 1957, Appendix 10, Hha28; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1959 (Uukwanyama), mmm 18–20 Jan 1960, unnumbered appendix, Hha31.All in AFMS, NAF.

321 E. Hynönen to O. Vuorela 29 Dec. 1959, Eac48, AFMS, NAF; Cooper, 2002, p. 252.

322 B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1955 (general report) & E. Pentti's Annual Report 1955 (western parishes) & J. Marttunen's Annual Report 1955 (Uukwanyama), mmm 10–12 Jan. 1956, Appendices 1, 9 and 10, Hha27, AFMS, NAF.

323 Efraim Angula, interviewed on 17 Nov. 1998 at Olukonda, Ondonga.

324 K. Hatakka's Annual Report 1954 (Uukwaluudhi girls' school), mmm 19–20 Jan 1955, Appendix 12, Hha26; B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1955 (general report) & J. Marttunen's Annual Report 1955 (Uukwanyama), mmm 10–12 Jan. 1956, Appendices 1 and 10, Hha27; E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1956 (Uukwanyama), mmm 9–12 Jan. 1957, Appendix 10, Hha28. All in AFMS, NAF. Vapaavuori, Tuure, Kertomus tarkastusmatkaltani... 1954, p. 62, Dga, AELCIN.

325 E.g. E. Hynönen's Annual Report 1952 (Uukwanyama), mmm 14–15 Jan 1953, Appendix 26, Hha24, AFMS, NAF; Natanael Shinana interviewed on 1 Dec 1998 at Engela, Uukwanyama; Johannes Kalenga interviewed on 7 Dec. 1998 at Etilyasa, Ongandjera; Transcript of McKittrick's interview with Kristofina Angula in 1997; McKittrick, 1995, p. 276–277; McKittrick, 2002, p. 250.

> "[At the revival meeting] I could listen only to two testimonials. The words hit me like a knife. I felt that they were speaking about my sins. I rushed out of the church and began running home. On the way I had to drop down to my knees five times to ask for God's forgiveness for my sins. When I got back home, I immediately ordered the women to take all my distilling equipment out and burn it."[326]

These decisions may often have been sudden, but they seldom lasted long. Most people returned to their pre-revival drinking habits as soon as the frenzy had died down.[327]

In the 1960s the missionaries were less interested in temperance work than in previous decades. It may be that they had now distanced themselves so far from congregational work that they simply did not have enough first-hand contacts with ordinary people to carry on with the temperance work. On the other hand, it may be that they had come to realize that their approach to promoting temperance was not going to achieve any results. I would bank on the latter explanation, because in the mid-1960s, after they had noted the ever-increasing alcoholism in Ovamboland[328], they decided to do something quite different from anything they had tried in the 1950s. Instead of preaching against drink, they now decided to appeal to the traditional leaders and ask them to do something. The missionaries' arguments against drinking also had a new tone now. It was seen primarily as a social and health problem, not as a moral problem as was the case in the 1950s.[329]

In conclusion, it can be said that the Ovambo reaction to the missionaries' temperance initiatives is an illustrative example of their response to missionary activities at a more general level. At first the Ovambo Christians just ignored those orders which they regarded as unacceptable, while later they began actively opposing and disobeying such orders. The new spirit of opposition was partly fed by the missionaries' uncompromising attitudes, particularly in the case of drinking, but also more generally. Had the missionaries been more willing to make compromises, they would obviously have had a much more pleasant stay in Ovamboland in the 1940s and 1950s, but compromises were something they could not allow, because of their excessive fear of syncretism.

326 Kekki, 1964, p. 37. (transl. KM)

327 Raportti lähetysjohtajan tarkastusmatkoilta 1954 (miss. dir's inspection of Ombalantu parish 20 Aug. 1954), Hha25 and B. Eriksson's Annual Report 1954 (general report), mmm 19–20 Jan 1955, Appendix 1, Hha26, AFMS, NAF; McKittrick's interview with Kristofina Angula in 1997.

328 Mmm 26–29 June 1964 §31, Hha35, AFMS, NAF.

329 Minutes of the committee investigating social grievances [in Ovamboland] 14 Aug. 1964 §3 and 5, mmm 29 Sept. 1964, Appendix 4, Hha35, AFMS, NAF.

Conclusions

The main aim of any mission organization is to make its target group convert to the religion which it considers the only true one. The Finnish missionaries were no exception in this respect, as their primary aim was to make the Ovambo into good, orthodox, humble Lutherans. This meant that they were expected to abandon all the customs which the missionaries regarded as contrary to their conception of proper Christianity, and as the missionaries had a very broad definition of what was "unchristian", their approach was bound to become very intolerant towards African culture, so that even customs which could not objectively be regarded as such could be labelled as potentially unchristian and therefore unacceptable. There was little room for assimilating aspects of Ovambo culture into Ovambo Lutheranism because the fear of syncretism was one of the missionaries' guiding forces. For the same reason they were also reluctant to allow the Ovambo Christians a say in moral issues. The task of making the Ovambo into humble Lutherans often led the missionaries to fear that the Christians might become proud, and therefore they sometimes had difficulties in recognizing the positive potentiality of the Africans as actors in the christianizing process. In a word, particularly up to the Second World War, the missionaries had little trust in or respect for the Africans. When trust was occasionally shown, as when the first Ovambo pastors were ordained in the 1920s, or when the Ovambo church was granted independence in the 1950s, this was not necessarily totally sincere, but was rather an outcome of the missionaries' conclusion that it was the only possible course of action under the prevailing circumstances. After the war the missionaries' attitude towards the Africans became somewhat more open-minded, but even in the 1960s their views still bore witness to an unmistakable patronizing attitude.

The secondary aim of many mission organizations has been to "civilize" the Africans, i.e. to provide them with suitable aspects of western secular knowledge. Although the quite extensive school network which the FMS founded in Ovamboland was obviously an important agent in spreading western knowledge and ideas, civilizing was not a self-evident aim of the Finnish missionary work, because during the first half of the twentieth century many missionaries felt that spreading secular knowledge was beyond their duty and calling. It was only in the 1930s, and more particularly after World War II, that "civilizing" was accepted by most missionaries as an important supportive activity alongside proselytizing.

The song about Black Saara showed us that in heaven Black becomes White. This is a good example of the cultural and religious sense of superiority which was an important background factor in the missionaries' activities. Their aim, however, was not to make the Africans totally white, i.e. exact copies of the Europeans, at least not yet, not in this world, for the European culture had many aspects which the missionaries detested and wanted to spare the Ovambo from. But in the religious sphere making them white was more clearly on the agenda. The missionaries

demanded that the Africans should adopt Lutheran dogmas and morals in the exact form which Lutheran leaders in Northern Europe regarded as correct. Thus culturally Black Saara was becoming a mulatto, who was to be religiously white.

Conversion to Christianity in Ovamboland was bound to be a slow process, because the Finnish missionaries were so reluctant to make any compromises concerning the form of Christianity the Ovambo should adopt. Large-scale conversions began only in the early 1920s, half a century after Finns had commenced their missionary work. The first years of the 1920s marked the first wave of conversions, after which number decreased somewhat until they again began increasing markedly in the late 1940s and early 1950s. As a consequence of this second wave approximately half of the Ovambo population had become Christian by the early 1960s.

The majority of those who converted were young people in their late teens and early twenties (15 to 24 years of age), the proportion of whom was much higher among the converts than in the population at large. Young people also made up the majority of converts throughout the period studied here, even though their predominance was somewhat less marked during the second wave of conversions, when the older generation was also drawn to the new religion.

Women always made up the majority of those who converted in Ovamboland, but this is not the whole truth concerning the gender aspect of conversion, because a considerable proportion of the men were baptized while on labour contracts outside Ovamboland. When these men are taken into account, the female predominance turns into a male predominance up to the mid-1920s and it is only after that that women were in the majority among the converts. This indicates that during the early stages of christianization it was easier for men to be baptized, the basic reason for this probably being the matrilineal system of kinship, in which the women are the carriers of the lineage, which meant that a desire on their part to leave not only the indigenous religious sphere, but to some extent also the indigenous social network, was more forcefully opposed by their non-Christian relatives than the men's wish to do the same.

The beginning of large scale conversions in the early 1920s has sometimes been attributed to the devastating famine of 1915/1916, which is said to have been a shock which overturned the old world view and cleared room for the adoption of a new one. Although the great famine was obviously a shock, it is not a credible explanation for the conversions. Not only is the span between the alleged cause and effect too long, but also the fact that the famine killed many Christians speaks against such an interpretation. Since Christians died as well, the famine could not logically be propagated as a token of the Christian God meting out punishment to those who had not converted. It is more likely that the conversions began because of another, slightly later shock, the killing of King Mandume of Uukwanyama by the South Africans during a short war in 1917. This was an unprecedented show of force by a technologically superior power and it spread a fear of the Europeans all over Ovamboland. It is hardly a coincidence, either, that it was the Kwanyama, who suffered most directly from the war against Mandume, that were also the most

keen to convert of all the Ovambo. After the show of colonial force in 1917 people probably calculated that it was wise at this point to show obedience to the new rulers by taking an interest in what was regarded as their religion. Thus the conversions in the early 1920s may have been part of a practical survival strategy in a situation in which people were afraid that the colonial authorities might use force again in the future.

This explanation for the beginning of the mass conversions emphasizes people's practical aims as the reason why they adopted a new religious affiliation, an interpretation that follows the socio-structural tradition. This does not mean, however, that ideational or purely religious reasons could not have played a role in the process. Although conversions appear to have been predominately "secular" acts, many people apparently had also "religious" motives, and it would therefore be wrong to claim that converting for pragmatic reasons is incompatible with converting for ideological ones. Unfortunately the more devotional aspect of conversions is something that cannot be analyzed with sufficient certainty using the available sources.

The new increase in conversions from about 1950 onwards was a multi-causal phenomenon. Underlying it was the rapid population growth in the 1940s, which enlarged the pool of young people from which the converts were drawn. Also, the intensification and Africanization of the missionary work since the 1930s had contributed to the increase. Not only was the message now taken to the most remote areas, but it was also easier to adopt it, because it was preached by fellow Africans. Furthermore, it became easier to convert now that one could have a sense of joining an African church instead of a European one. There were also factors which made joining the Christian community more desirable than before. There may have emerged a belief that conversion was a way to avoid the wrath of the Christian God, which was believed to be manifested in the continued subsistence crisis of the late 1940s, but more obviously there had emerged a belief that only Christians could be regarded "civilized" people. Conversion could therefore now be both an attempt to seek mental escape from the stressful economic situation and an attempt to seek social recognition.

Apart from factors that can explain the timing of the waves of conversions, there are also factors which can, or cannot, explain conversions on a more general level throughout the period concerned here. The influence of the kings is one factor which seems to have been quite unimportant for the christianization process, even though the Ovambo kings had been almost omnipotent rulers of their communities during the pre-colonial era. A king who wanted to promote Christianity could do relatively little to make his subjects convert, at least without risking his own position as king. If he wanted to prevent his subjects from converting, however, he could do something in the short term, because he possessed means of intimidating potential converts. But in the long run even King Iipumbu of Uukwambi, who was more strongly opposed to the missionaries and Christians than any of his colleagues, could not prevent many of his subjects from converting. Another factor that was scarcely very relevant as an explanation of the conversions was the converts' wish to gain direct access to material rewards by converting. Before the mass conversions, when the number of Christians was still small, such an

aim probably played a role, because the missionaries did provide the Christians with goods which were needed for a decent Christian living, but when the number of converts increased considerably, the missionaries were no longer able nor willing to be a source of free goods. Whether the aim of gaining indirect access to material rewards, through formal education, for example, played any role when people decided to associate with the missionaries cannot be said with any certainty. The sources simply have too little information on the subject, but there are some pieces of information which seem to indicate that such an idea cannot be excluded out of hand.

One factor that played an important role in christianization concerned the Ovambo social networks and personal relations. The road towards conversion seems initially to have begun for many people when they learned about the new religion from their peers or relatives who were either Christians or under the influence of the missionaries. The role of peer relations is quite evident in the case of the men who converted when they were on labour contracts, for example, as they not only learned about Christianity from their workmates but also received their pre-baptism education from them and not from the missionaries. The unusually close peer relations during periods of contract labour were not the main reason why so many men converted under such circumstances, however, for a more important consideration was that conversion outside Ovamboland, without thorough religious education from the Finnish missionaries, was an unusually easy way of becoming a Christian. This indicates that many of these men apparently did not convert on the grounds of religious conviction but rather had some secular reasons or practical aims in mind. It is small wonder, therefore, that the missionaries regarded the migrant labour converts as the least sincere of all the Ovambo Christians.

The missionaries were never really happy with the standard of the Ovambo Christians' Christianity, not with their knowledge of Christian dogma, nor with their devotion or their morals. That is not surprising, because their criteria for "a good Christian" were so demanding that it would have been scarcely possible for the majority of any larger group of people to have lived up to them. The missionaries' constant complaints about their followers' poor standard of Christianity nevertheless show that they and the Ovambo Christians had differing opinions about what conversion and being a Christian meant. The missionaries were rigorous and expected converts not only to associate themselves with the new religion but also to adopt its dogmas and modes of behaviour in their entirety, but majority of the Ovambo Christians were more flexible and adopted Christianity only to the extent that suited their needs, while they ignored, and occasionally even opposed, the rest of missionaries' package. They were happy to mix aspects of Christianity even with aspects of their own culture which the missionaries' regarded as unacceptable for Christians, and in this respect they were far from being just passive recipients of missionary Christianity. All this means that the religious change caused by the conversions was anything but total, and that people's reasons for converting were obviously not purely religious but often apparently served more practical and earthly needs. Thus in many cases the Ovambo conversions were not conversions in the strictest sense of the word; they affiliated themselves to the new church but

did not adopt the new faith in a manner that excluded other sets of morals or explanations of the world.

As the missionaries regarded their converts as poor Christians who were prone to vice and "sliding back to heathenism", steps had to be taken to keep them on the strait and narrow path. To some extent this was done by trying to isolate them from the heathens, apostates and vices of the world, but total isolation from the rest of the community was neither possible nor even in interests of the missionaries, for had the Christians had no contacts with their non-Christian compatriots, the missionaries would have lost an important means of proselytism. Another attempt to maintain Christian standards was to set up an extensive system of surveillance among the Christians. Not only were the Ovambo pastors and parish elders obliged to keep an eye on other Christians and inform missionaries of their misdeeds but rank-and-file Christians were also expected to do so. This system does not seem to have worked, however, because the Christians were reluctant to spy on their neighbours for the missionaries.

During the first half of the twentieth century the missionaries may have had a fairly understanding approach to the Christians' imperfections; they were converts who had lived all their lives under heathenism and therefore it was natural that they could not turn into perfect Christians overnight. After World War II the tone was different, however, for now the Christians' vices and their "admiration of heathenism" were taken by the missionaries as acts of open defiance, a view that was not necessarily very far from truth, because the Christians' attitude towards missionaries had indeed changed. They apparently never fully trusted the European missionaries, but had clearly respected them at the beginning of the century, whereas after the war this respect had worn thin and they no longer hesitated to criticize the missionaries or question their views openly. The new attitude was most marked among the elite who had been educated in mission circles, in particular among the teachers, and was to a considerable extent a reflection of the new opposition to Europeans that was gaining ground among Africans throughout the continent. Another relevant background factor was the fact that after the war a larger proportion of the Christians were people who had been baptized as children and had therefore not made the decision to become Christians themselves. This allowed them to be more critical towards the missionaries' set of beliefs and practices. Such an attitude was not a complete novelty, however, as Christians had sometimes opposed the missionaries, actively or passively, even before the war, as shown by the disagreements concerning the acceptability of customs such as girls' initiation rites or the wedding ox.

The most important social consequence of christianization was the emergence of a new sub-group inside Ovambo society, the Christians. These people had to some extent different values, modes of behaviour and social networks from the rest of the community, and therefore christianization was bound to cause some social antagonism and conflicts. Some non-Christians obviously regarded conversions as a threat to the established social order, as is indicated by the often fierce, sometimes violent, resistance by those of the older generation to their younger relatives' wishes to become Christian. The older generation appears to have been afraid that

conversions might not only destabilize important social hierarchies, but might also endanger their spiritual existence after death. Furthermore, they were concerned that they might lose their children's labour contribution if these sought baptism. On the other hand, not all non-Christians regarded christianization as a threat, because there were also cases where younger relatives' wishes to convert caused no conflicts within their kin.

Antagonism turned into open conflicts less often on the community level than within kin groups, although there was a sense of separation or alienation between the groups, a sort of "us and them"situation, particularly in the western communities, where Christianity was a newer phenomenon than in the east. This did not necessarily have much effect on relations in everyday matters, where contacts between Christians and non-Christians existed, but the groups seem to have kept their distance when it came to matters relating to religious beliefs and practices.

Another quite important outcome of the missionaries' activities was the change they caused in power relations on the community level. Although the missionaries had no agenda to weaken the power of the traditional Ovambo elite, and although their direct influence on these people's use of power was insignificant, they still indirectly weakened the base of this power. They occasionally publicly questioned decisions which the members of traditional elite had made, thus setting an obvious example to their adherents, but more important was the fact that they created a new, indigenous educated elite of teachers and pastors. In due course many ordinary people transferred their primary allegiance from the traditional elite to this new elite, particularly after the former had made itself increasingly unpopular after World War II because of its close association with the colonial authorities.

Although the creation of a new sub-group and a new elite were the most important social changes that the missionary work and christianization brought about, the missionaries' role as agents of social change in Ovamboland should not be exaggerated. Social change per se was not even their aim; they only wanted to change Ovambo society to an extent which was regarded necessary for the survival of a Lutheran community behaving in a Christian manner. It should also be borne in mind that the social outcomes of their activities could be ambiguous. The effects of their actions on gender relations provide a good example in this respect. The missionaries had no real interest in trying to bring about a fundamental change in Ovambo gender relations, because they were basically happy with the indigenous system, but they did cause some changes. On the one hand, it can be said that they weakened the position of women, because their rules concerning divorce were stricter than the indigenous ones and therefore Christian women had fewer legitimate ways of rid themselves of a violent or negligent husband than their non-Christian sisters had. On the other hand, the mission offered a limited number of women opportunities for independent cash earnings as employees. In both cases, however, the change was limited by economic and social realities. Many Christians chose to continue to follow the indigenous rules of divorce rather than those of the missionaries, or were obliged to do so, while most of those women who were employed by the mission had to resign after a few years in order to marry and become housewives like all the others.

There are some cases in which missionaries tried to advocate change in important social customs but faced strong African opposition. The fights over girls' initiation rites and the wedding ox are again examples of this. The missionaries believed that it would not be possible to create a properly Christian Ovambo community until these "pillars of heathenism" had been eradicated. But initiation and the wedding ox were very important customs which maintained the indigenous social system, and therefore many Christians ignored, or had to ignore, the missionaries' bans on them. The longstanding disputes over these customs ultimately ended in the missionaries' defeat, indicating that their capacity for enforcing change was insufficient relative to the forces opposed to such change. But that was not the only reason. Had the missionaries adopted a somewhat more flexible attitude, they would probably have been able to achieve better results. But they could not do so because of their fear of syncretism. An uncompromising approach was also evidently the reason for their defeat on the issue of temperance in the 1940s and 1950s.

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Appendix 1
Converts to Lutheran Christianity in Ovamboland 1910 – 1966

	ON-DON-GA	UUK-WAN YAMA	UUK-WAM-BI	ON-GAND-JERA	UUK-WA LUUDHI	OMB ALAN-TU	UUKO-LON-KADHI	TOTAL
1910	93	–	7	8	0	–	–	108
1911	88	–	0	5	0	–	–	93
1912	226	–	0	3	0	–	–	229
1913	126	–	2	8	7	–	–	143
1914	116	–	10	11	11	–	–	148
1915	72	–	0	4	0	–	–	76
1916	182	–	3	10	7	–	–	202
1917	106	–	7	12	4	–	–	129
1918	157	–	12	17	12	–	–	198
1919	368	45	8	15	23	5	–	464
1920	859	474	17	15	18	3	4	1390
1921	1056	2	44	27	17	13	11	1170
1922	693	969	39	20	25	19	7	1772
1923	260	408	11	29	27	31	4	770
1924	202	289	0	38	35	52	15	631
1925	270	260	32	13	24	17	2	618
1926	336	384	..	27	24	34	3	808
1927	434	290	76	63	33	42	6	944
1928	306	199	104	28	30	30	7	704
1929	58	187	66	35	24	15	5	390
1930	89	112	76	16	17	14	0	324
1931	194	158	49	6	33	13	0	453
1932	316	239	86	6	17	9	0	673
1933	466	268	134	7	10	31	4	920
1934	412	180	162	16	24	7	4	805
1935	275	242	200	21	41	5	10	794
1936	321	280	148	13	29	9	4	804
1937	259	224	102	52	17	16	5	675
1938	331	231	96	56	28	52	4	798
1939	277	327	91	166	67	56	7	991
1940	294	282	126	149	97	41	6	995
1941	288	263	141	188	121	68	22	1091
1942	88	255	109	156	63	34	1	706
1943	541	293	135	118	33	54	1	1175
1944	351	280	121	83	8	104	18	965
1945	408	346	197	28	16	40	20	1055
1946	280	369	205	87	62	77	20	1100
1947	332	394	193	83	63	41	13	1119
1948	571	425	309	112	67	25	7	1516
1949	709	603	151	96	90	49	38	1736
1950	1033	824	171	172	82	59	31	2372
1951	1128	956	300	195	98	..	..	2677
1952	1429	1243	436	187	118	..	..	3413
1953	1141	1207	307	172	138	..	..	2965
1954	445	826	232	76	113	123	27	1842
1955	357	559	105	117	50	80	46	1314
1956	445	618	138	121	129	54	17	1522
1957	485	522	163	159	153	17	25	1524
1958	341	532	286	95	223	60	10	1547
1959	462	712	181	103	214	73	55	1800

1960	935	703	126	196	331	134	47	2472
1961	440	636	202	135	321	129	73	1936
1962	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1963	720	687	125	252	302	180	61	2327
1964	667	944	143	15	545	131	66	2711
1965	624	912	150	311	277	209	22	2505
1966	511	843	150	211	419	364	210	2708

Source:
Statistical tables concerning the work of the Finnish Mission Society in Ovamboland [Tilastotaulut Suomen Lähetysseuran työstä lähetysalueellaan Ambomaalla] 1910-1966. As appendices in the minutes of the missionaries' meetings, Hha6–38, Archives of the Finnish Mission Society, National Archives of Finland.
Note:
With the exception of years 1910 to 1914 the figures include also some amount of children who were baptised at the same time with their mothers.

Apendix 2
Converted migrant labourers of six Ovambo parishes 1910–1964

	OSHI-GAMBO	EENHA-NA	ELIM	OKAHAO	TSANDI	NAKA-YALE
1910–14	0	–	1	2	..	–
1915–19	51	–	10	10	..	–
1920–24	187	–	216	63	78	125
1925–29	49	–	26	37	45	41
1930–34	19	–	69	31	19	22
1935–39	50	3	113	31	10	18
1940–44	78	11	109	36	32	38
1945–49	116	18	196	62	23	47
1950–54	221	52	350	188	71	66
1955–59	142	40	88	121	50	45
1960–64	144	5	80	140	173	49

Source:
Registers of immigartion of the mentioned parishes.
Note:
Missing figures: Nakayale 1924, Elim 1928 and Tsandi 1948 & 1949.

Appendix 3
Dramatis Personae

Kings of Ondonga

Kambonde (Eino Johannes) kaNgula	1909–1912
Nambala (Martin Elifas) yaKadhikwa	1912–1942
Kambonde (Johannes) kaNamene	1942–1960
Nambala (Martin) gaAshikoto	1960–1967

Kings of Uukwanyama

Nande Hamalwa	1904–1911
Mandume yaNdemufayo	1911–1917 (deposed)

Kings of Uukwambi

Iipumbu yaTshilongo	1907–1932 (deposed)

Kings of Ongandjera

Shanika na Shilongo	1887–1931
Sheya na Shilongo	1931–1935
Shanika Iipinge	1935–1948
Ushona ya Shiimi	1948–1972

Kings of Uukwaluudhi

Mwaala gwa Shilongo	1909–1956

Resident Commissioners / Native Commissioners Ovamboland

Charles N.N. Manning (Mayola)	1915–1920
Carl Hugo Linsingen Hahn (Shongola)	1921–1946
Harold Lionel Eedes (Nakale)	1947–1953
Bruwer Blignaut	1954–1955
K. R. Crossman	1955– ?
Strydom	? – 1958
Richter	1959– ?

Mission directors, Finnish Mission Society

Jooseppi Mustakallio	1898–1913
Matti Tarkkanen	1914–1934
Kustaa Adolf Paasio	1934–1935
Uno Henrik Paunu	1936–1946
Tuure Vapaavuori	1946–1955
Olavi Vuorela	1955–1966

Presiding missionaries, Finnish Mission Ovamboland

Martti Rautanen (Nakambale, Nakambalekanene)	1885–1920
Viktor Alho	1920–1922
Kaarlo Jalmari Petäjä	1922–1923
Karl Christian Reinhold Rautanen (Nakambalegona)	1923–1925
Viktor Alho	1925–1935
Walde Kivinen (Manya lyaNangula)	1935–1937
Viktor Alho	1937–1952
Birger Eriksson (Ashipala)	1952–1958
Alpo Hukka	1958–1963
Arvo Eirola	1963–past 1965

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